**University of Alberta**

# Comparative Study on African and Slavic Folklores in Literature: A Case Study of Amos Tutuola and Nikolai Gogol

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Slavic Languages and Literatures

Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 2007

Library and Archives Canada

Published Heritage Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
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Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Direction du Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

*Your file Votre référence*
*ISBN: 978-0-494-33106-4*
*Our file Notre référence*
*ISBN: 978-0-494-33106-4*

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## Abstract

This study investigates the depiction of African and Slavic supernatural lore in Amos Tutuola's literary oeuvre and Nikolai Gogol's Ukrainian tales. Advancing the study of literature in the service of society, and examining how this advancement helps to foreground and extend debates such as racism and nationalism, I explore how the reading community of literature derives meaning from the text as though it were an ethnographic resource. In the light of this proposition, the thesis compares how the two writers in question represent folk belief in the supernatural.

The approach to this study takes three forms: (1) the textual analysis of the works of these writers; (2) the reader-reception of folk elements in the texts; (3) and the theoretical explanation of the outcome of the reader-response project. At the heart of my theoretical reading is the adoption and application of Noam Chomsky's linguistic notion of the *deep* and *surface* structure for the analysis of folklore in literature. Also, I balance this with a critical evaluation of phenomenological and empiricist approaches to the reading of cultural texts.

## Dedication

To the Almighty God

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been the result of encouraging stimulation from many people. I will make a conscious effort to remember these people on this page. First of all, I would like to express a profound appreciation to my supervisors, Professors Peter Rolland and Elena Siemens, for their support during the course of my program at the University of Alberta, and for their critical and supervisory contribution towards the completion of this thesis. Also, Professor Onookome Okome is appreciated for examining the thesis and for his criticism.

My family, including my sweet mother, Mrs. Deborah Omobonike Adetunji, my sisters: Mrs. Grace Abosede Akpan, Yemisi Adetunji, Ronke Adetunji, and my brother, Christopher Adetunji and his family have all been a huge source of inspiration for my intellectual and moral development especially throughout the challenging time of my study. I owe you all a deep debt of gratitude.

My friends are too many to have them all mentioned on this page. I will specially thank a few who were of moral or, of some other kind of support during the course of my academic program and especially for this thesis. I thank Seyi Akande for helping to print the thesis and for being there for me, Idowu Ohioze for his moral support and encouragement and standing up for me, Olumide Adetunji has been a good friend, my newest friend, Omodele Osinowo is one of God's sent at this moment, Tayo Ogunwemimo, Suleiman, Eli and his family, have been good "brothers" to me in Edmonton. My former landlord, Mr. Eberhard Lorberg is an epitome of what is called human kindness. I remember Omayra Abdulahi Issa, Debo Onifade, Niyi Awe and the Awe family, and Yemi Akinyugha is another epitome of human kindness.

From the MLCS constituency, I thank the indefatigable graduate secretary, Jane Wilson for all the help rendered, moral support and encouragement in the course of my program. I extend this appreciation to all other workers at the MLCS general office including Scott Jensen. Members of the Graduate Students Association Council and the General Faculties Council, in which I was privileged to represent graduate students at the University of Alberta, are all acknowledged. I also thank Dr. Joseph Iyekpekele, Tom Welz,

Volha Isakava and Ksenia Svechnikova for their moral support. Delma Gilwilson, Sarah De Lano, Kattie and Fredrik are remembered. I acknowledge McKernan Christian Church for its contribution to my spiritual uplifting.

Finally, I thank my school bag for its loyalty.

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# INTRODUCTION

The term magic is a controversial concept. A list of dictionary definitions of the term first takes this into account by describing it as "the art of producing illusions as entertainment by the use of sleight of hand, deceptive devices..."[1] Other numerous dictionary explanations associate the word with an art that purports to control or forecast natural events, effects, or forces by invoking the super -natural.[2] From being an illusory and deceptive device to an element capable of displacing natural order, the term can thus be seen as a creator of three traditions.

The first tradition comprises those who believe in the existence of magic as a direct manifestation of the supernatural. The bulk of these faithful can be found within the folk community where belief in magic is a definitive factor in the affairs of life. The folk community is in a binary opposition with the Christian world that attempts to define its *otherness* and thus recognizes magic as a real existence of the demonic. The second tradition encompasses those who disbelieve, reject, and disregard existence of magic, identifying it as a mere illusion, deception and tricks for entertainment purposes. This group finds a large membership in the scientific community, which, for instance opposes astrology for propagating "irrationalism and obscurantism."[3]

The third tradition is a camp of "doubting Thomases." This category includes those who do not believe, those who do not disbelief, and those who sometimes believe but shoulder a committed responsibility in demonstrating that belief in the supernatural exists. This group finds a large membership among ethnographers and literary or folk writers. Although the etymology of the word "magic" dates to 1384[4], a major event demonstrating its existence and belief in it can be seen in biblical Egypt. "Magic was an inherent part of

the ancient Egyptian religion, and entered largely into their daily life." Again the first major opposition to it was in the same biblical Egypt when it became prohibited under penalty of death in Mosaic law.[5]

Fear, belief and practice of magic, sorcery, witchcraft, fortune-telling etc, spread from traditional folk communities as well as in "non-traditional" Western societies. Hanchuk, as I refer to in chapter 2, confirms this through a thorough research on a magico-religious ceremony among Ukrainians in rural and urban Alberta, known as the Wax Ritual. For instance, this group of people resorts to this traditional practice as a form of folk medicine for healing. There has been an incredibly formidable opposition against the practice and belief in magic since its proliferation in modern societies. In 1975, 186 leading scientists, including 18 Nobel Prize winners publicly denounced astrology and magic in general.[6] This group argue against the magical falsification of reality in which fortune and misfortune are divorced from a human reference and blamed on the spiritual powers of evil and good.[7]

This controversy about the authenticity of magic has received some attention in literary circles. For instance, while noting that "magical realism" is an essential feature of the modern Latin American novel [8], Maria-Elena Angula echoes Irlemar Chiampi's concern in literary criticism, for "the confusion of magical realism with fantastic literature."[9] Hence there is a dividing line between the magical and fantastic in literature. One could approach a more lucid terminological diagnosis. For example, in the world of religion, there is the spiritual or the demonic. In the folk world, there is the magical and supernatural, in the world of science, there is the metaphysical and the empirical, and in the world of literature, we have the fantastic, grotesque, romantic and sentimental. The difference between these

terms goes beyond the type that can be found between one and the same thing. It involves some semantic variations vaguely defined along the causative and validating factors.

In folk literature, there is an inevitable tendency for the writer to draw motifs from folk materials in pursuing his personal ends through a bastion of imaginings. On a different note, belief in the materials the writer presents in his works is so strong in both the conscious and subconscious being of the traditional folk community. More often than not, the strength of these beliefs is nourished by lived experiences .For instance, while researching witch-cat belief in Ukrainian cosmology, I had a three-hour interview with 73-year old Sofia Maksymivna Stasyuk on November 12, 2006.[10]

Sofia had just come on a brief visit to Edmonton to see her children and grandchildren, one of whom translated for me. She hails from Pidhaitsi village in Volyn Region of Ukraine, where she still lives. Sofia has lived all her life in this village and was enthusiastic in giving as much folk belief about animals as she could. While explaining animal beliefs, she recounted a particular childhood incident she experienced on the eve of the Second World War, when in the village, most of the dogs rose up with two legs up and the villagers immediately considered it a bad omen. Almost immediately after this sign the Germans came, raided, and burned down the village.

I can recount a personal experience with Baruba people in Taberu village, Baruten Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria, where I had my national service for one year as a high school teacher. The Baruba people are predominantly Muslims, but nonetheless possess strong ties to pre-Islamic traditional worship and religion. The belief in the snake and stone as two forms of gods through which harmony or disharmony can reign

supreme in the community is prevalent. Throughout my stay, snakes, scorpions and other venomous reptiles craw along the streets and sometimes in the yard of the people but they are never bitten. A case of snake bite was immediately greeted with spiritual explanation.

On my arrival at the village, some of the senior colleagues I met there told me how their bus had to wait for some minutes before crossing a big ditch as a big sacred python was passing by. At my departure, I began to take pictures of the huts with my students. When I was going to take a shot of the stone shrine, a native told me 'it's not possible.' I ignored him and went ahead. When I developed the pictures, it was only the exposure for the stone shrine that did not come out. There are such many cases of the bizarre in the village.

Yet the folklorist, ethnographer, or anthropologist assumes neutrality that is appropriate to his professional practice by being merely a conveyor of folk belief in magic while sometimes demonstrating personal antipathy to it. The scientist is its greatest enemy. This is because science does not indulge in any form of complacency in rejecting the existence of magic. What does the literary artist do? Does the short story writer display a sense of gratitude to the oral source of his motifs? To what extent does he present the beliefs like his ethnographer counterpart? What is the effect of the writer's handling of folk materials on the reception of a reader from a foreign culture?

This is similar to audience perception of foreign films. Both the literary and cinematic media constitute a system of cultural knowledge. The standard with which this system operates fails to meet the requisite precision for a prevention of inaccurate cultural education for readers and viewers alike. The result of questionnaires which I distributed allows me to argue that; readers and viewers of foreign literary and cinematic texts respectively adopt literature of foreign culture as an ethnographic resource. The responses

further confirm the fragile nature of the reading process which involves knowing a people, a culture, through literature.

The consequence of this is a "distortion" of cultural knowledge, propagation of stereotypical formulations, which could lead to nationalism, racism and other isms and which is the result of half-truth or misinformation. How do we realize a reliable solution? The literary writer is more often than not informed by his own personal wishes, desires, and ambition when inscribing culture into literature. The mythopoeic writer like Taras Shevchenko, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka, has an ideological objective to which the tenor of his work is tailored. On the other hand, the folk writer like Nikolai Gogol (though Gogol's literary oeuvre extends beyond the confines of a folk literature) and Amos Tutuola exploits folk materials in entertaining his readers sometimes with the sole intent of gaining monetary returns. (Both writers do not directly engage in myth-making like did the writers in the other category. Although I have refrained from the term "myth" and instead adopted "belief" in the case of Tutuola, both writers, however, merely convey the "myths" as they exist in individual culture.)[11]

The literary critic has been put forward as the messiah capable of saving the reader from being misinformed by the cryptic nature of the written text. For example, in his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Northrop Frye argues for criticism as a separate science which emerges from literature, just like the birth of physics from natural philosophy and sociology from moral philosophy. In doing this, he postulates a mediatory role for the critic between the writer and his reader. The critic, according to Frye, is the "middleman" whose "function is essentially a form of consumer's research."[12] What this suggests is that the

critic as a researcher must process, package the artist's production before it gets to the final consumer - the reader.

However, there is a need to evolve a systematic approach to solving this problem, such that both the critic and reader are involved in the processing and packaging. Accordingly, these issues are as germane as the dichotomous prophylactic drive provoking this thesis: through the *appropriation* of Chomskian deep and surface structure, I have reread the extant elements that are of supernatural significance in the works of the two writers considered in this study. For instance, like I explain in chapter 1, 2 and 3, the fundamental folkloric motifs of "abiku", reincarnation, "mogbon juba", "iwin", Yoruba ontological philosophy, religion and most importantly, the connection between the god Obatala in Yoruba ontological philosophy and Tutuola's invincible hero, the Drinkard, (This invincibility is a character trait evident in almost all of his main characters but the source of which is deeply rooted in Yoruba ontological god, Obatala) etc; are the deep structure of the writer's works.

Similarly, Ukrainian belief in the supernatural, for instance, belief in the Rusalka, fern's flower, witchcraft practices, the devil as depicted in *vertep* theater tradition, the *domovik* (house spirit), etc., are the deep structures in Gogol's Ukrainian tales. Although, like I have argued in chapter 2, in the case of Gogol, authorial idiosyncrasy may count as part of this deep structure. For instance, a sole connection is enforced between the witch and the cat in the tales, creating what I have described as the witch-cat discourse, which is nonetheless foreign to Ukrainian belief system. Through rigorous inquiry, I discovered that the main source of this element in Gogol is neither the Ukrainian ethnography, nor

influence from his prior consumption of Western literature, but the author's childhood dream experience.

Therefore, the appropriation of Chomskian deep and surface structures becomes necessary in the analysis of cultural texts since it helps form a distinction between what is known in the reading process and the intricacies (deep structure) that must be discovered outside of the text in order to enhance a full understanding of the tenor of the text and form a dividing line between culture as it is in literature, and culture without literature. The linguistic notion of deep structure, as against surface structure, portends that apart from the canonical grammar in every language, there are underlying semantic variations and formulations represented in a hidden, unspoken or unrecognized grammar. The appropriation of this term in the analysis of cultural texts has nothing to do with grammaticalness of the text. But it reflects the complex nature of the text .A detailed explanation is given in chapter 3. I also explore the balance between a phenomenological and empiricist approaches to the reading of cultural texts.

The comparative study on African and Slavic folklores in literature seems too vague and too broad a topic. Again, the Nigerian Amos Tutuola and the Ukrainian Nikolai Gogol (Hohol) possess remarkable differences in both a diachronic and synchronic dimensions. While Tutuola belongs to the Afro-literary tradition of the mid and late 20th century, Gogol belongs to the Russian Romantic literary tradition of a century earlier. The one was the son of a farmer, the other of a dubiously ennobled landowner. The one experiments on episodic romance in a post-enlightenment world, the other was part of the creative force of romanticist East Slavic imperial culture. While the one is referred to as the pioneer of Nigerian novel and the first African writer in the English language, the

other has been adjudged a pioneer of modern Russian prose. The Russian "Shakespeare", the Great poet, Alexander Pushkin was one of those who were fond of Gogol's early prose and gave him a helping hand in developing the prose genre and in becoming a great writer.

Moreover, while Tutuola was an active contributor to popular culture in being a creator and teller of folk narrative, Gogol too was involved in the formative process of the East Slavic high culture through the medium of belles letters. However, both typological similarities. Both borrowed a lot from folk elements. Both wrote in a colonial language. The two were not actively involved in nationalistic struggles, even though they showed unalloyed enthusiasm and loyalty to their origins. While it has been pointed out that Tutuola employs numerous *Yorubanism*, Gogol, too, used many *Ukrainianism* particularly in his early prose. Both were a subject of intense controversy. Tutuola was accused of plagiarism and obvious use of incorrect English, Gogol's nationality is an important factor in the identity crisis between the Russians and Ukrainians. While Tutuola's works at the initial stage of the writer's career, are described by some local and soviet critics as "pseudo-novels" and childish, Gogol's *Ukrainian Tales* were criticized in the Russian literary tradition, where his Ukrainian stories are compared to the popular *lyubok* literature, which was regarded as a literature of low culture. Both suffered a lot for lack of money.

I should necessarily inform that both writers have not been given equal attention in this thesis. The reason for this is that while Tutuola remains a folk story writer until his death, Gogol abandoned Ukrainian themes and explored Petersburg themes and other writings that gained much greater critical attention in the Russian literary tradition.

Gogol's *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka* and two tales from his later collection, *Mirgorod* are the only works most suitable for this comparative study because of their substantive concentration of spiritual lore which describes the author's cosmic origin and which are most evidently extant in the tales than in his other works. Chapter 1 presents Yoruba folk beliefs that are germane to elements found in Tutuola's works and considers all of Tutuola's ten novels. Chapter 2 explores Ukrainian beliefs in the supernatural, especially those extant in Gogol's tales from *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*. In chapter 3, the analysis of questionnaires is done with a critical evaluation of reader-response theory.

Moreover, I have given a brief analysis of Chomskian generative grammar and explored the possibility of appropriating its derivative terms: "deep and surface structure" to the analysis of cultural texts. And in drawing significant attention to the reading process, I have tried in this chapter, to fine-tune the best way of preventing readers' misguided approach to learning culture from literature. Hence the adoption of the balance between phenomenological and empiricist models in the approach to cultural texts.

Finally, the library of Congress transliteration system is used in chapter 2 while Yoruba words are either accompanied with translations in parenthesis or are given detailed explanation in the end note. All technical translations and explanations are my own.

# CHAPTER 1: YORUBA SPIRITUAL LORE AND AMOS TUTUOLA.

## Amos Tutuola: Life, Works and Critical Reception

Amos Tutuola's life and rise to world fame give validity to Bernth Lindfors' phrase: "a writer almost by accident."[13] Born in 1920 to a Christian cocoa farmer in Abeokuta, South-West Nigeria, Tutuola obtained elementary education from three different schools as a result of circumstances surrounding his upbringing. As a house boy to a federal civil servant, he suffered maltreatment from the wife of his boss's friend in Lagos and thus moved back to Abeokuta. At the death of his father in 1939, the young Amos struggled to complete his grade six in elementary school with income from farming.

Unfortunately, like many of his heroes and heroines, the tenacity of his "persistence, ingenuity, resourcefulness, tolerance, kindness, and forbearance"[14] could not outwit the power of nature, which determines his fate, bringing drought and ultimately, his withdrawal from school. Firmly rooted in Yoruba oral tradition and constantly listening to his mother, aunt, and old men telling folk stories on the farm, Amos became a prolific story teller. By 1940, he began to learn the blacksmithing trade while living with his brother in Lagos. He joined the Royal Air Force as a coppersmith in 1942 and strove fruitlessly to establish a blacksmith shop when he was discharged from the RAF after the Second World War in 1945.

Tutuola's unmediated road to international fame began when he was employed as a messenger in the Lagos Department of Labor. There he found idle moments at work sometimes leading to excessive boredom. Right at his desk, he recalled the pleasure of story telling and listening and resolved to dispel boredom by reenacting this blissful episode of his past in writing.Tutuola, the "messenger-turned-author", wrote down stories

blended with folk materials in a pattern typical of the enthusiastic oral story-teller that he used to be. He wrote *The Wild Hunter in the Bush of Ghosts* in two days and enlarged it in three months. The same circumstances surrounded his second written, but first published work: *The Palm Wine Drinkard and His Dead Palm Wine Tap-Star in the Deads' Town.* For the writer, this was just a pastime: "in a day I cannot sit down doing nothing. I was just playing at it. My intention was not to send it anywhere."[15]

But in 1950 Tutuola read an advertisement in a local newspaper for the United Society for Christian Literature and decided to enlarge and draft a final copy of his second written story and send it to them. The society did not publish novels, but commended his effort by helping him find a publisher. Faber and Faber published the "grade six" English manuscript in May 1952.The American edition by Grove Press came out in 1953 and by 1955, the book had been translated into "French, Italian, German and Serbo-Croatian."[16] The Nigerian "Homeric Bunyan" became the first African writer in English, the most African of all African writers and the pioneer of a discontinued Nigerian literature.[17]

Between 1952 and 1990, Tutuola has published 10 books of approximately 100 to 200 pages each in length. These include *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and His Dead Palm-wine Tapster in the Dead's Town* (1952, 1953), *My Life in A Bush of Ghosts* (1954, 1978), *Simbi and the Satyr of the Dark Jungle* (1955), *The Brave African Huntress* (1958), *Feather Woman of the Jungle* (1962), *Ajaiyi and His Inherited Poverty* (1967), *The Witch-Herbalist of the Remote Town* (1981), *Pauper, Brawler and Slanderer* (1987), *The Village Witch Doctor and Other Stories* (1990).

By 1975 when he had written 6 books, Tutuola was mentioned in almost every book and survey article on African literature in English. By this same time, there had been about 67 reviews, 79 detailed writings about him and his works. By 1997, Tutuola had been translated into no less than 15 major languages of the world, including Russian. However, a paradoxical denouement in his success story suggests the Supreme Being, destiny and fate, typical of his plots and themes are the common denominator on which other factors of life rest: as though destined to only be famous but not wealthy, Tutuola remained poor until his death in 1997. [18]

I have identified three major traditions in the criticism and reception of Tutuola's world. The case of Tutuola reminds one of Northrop Frye's view of literary criticism as an inevitable discipline to literature.[19] In other words, without criticism, one cannot know what literature is and what is not. The Welsh poet Dylan Thomas set the pace for the first tradition which is composed of reputable critics across Europe and America singing Tutuola's praise and calling for a serious critical attention to his works. Thomas's review in *The Observer* "appeared on the dust jacket of the Grove Press edition" and this drew a lot of critical interest to the author's African subject.[20]

Tutuola's fame grew when Professor Geoffrey Parrinder wrote the forward for Tutuola's second book, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*.[21] Thomas and Parrinder are great authorities in literary affairs and the latter is a world renowned specialist on African anthropology and religions .[22] This school includes Gerald Moor, Harold Collins, Bernth Lindfors and Eric Robinson.[23] The second tradition presents an opposing response to the first. This group of critics, generally Nigerian intellectual, who have steadfastly striven to denigrate the praises of their Western counterparts accusing them of ignorance of African

affairs. They have argued that Tutuola wrote in an English language demeaning to Nigerian letters, did not qualify as a writer, plagiarized Yoruba folk stories and written works by D.O Fagunwa and that his fantastic imagery is not typical of Yoruba folklore. They expressed concern that this may further add to the Westerners stereotype of a barbaric image of Africa.

The pioneer of this school and Tutuola's chief literary adversary is a Yoruba reader of *West Africa* named Babasola Johnson. Johnson, who contended that "*Palm Wine Drinkard* should not have been published at all," [24] raised concern about the racist and stereotypical tendencies in Eric Robinson's praise of Tutuola.Concerning Tutuola's English, Robinson wrote: "Mr. Tutuola has a great talent for using these phrases which bring modern West Africa immediately before us...Mr.Tutuola...gives us the true macabre energy of Africa, and we are very much in his debt." These comments triggered off angry remarks from Johnson: "The language in which it is written is foreign to West Africans and English people, or anybody for that matter. It is bad enough to attempt an African narrative in "good English," it is worse to attempt it in Mr.Tutuola's strange lingo (or, shall I say, the language of the "Deads"?)."[25]

A more piquant expression of Johnson's apprehension and contention is given by Adeagbo Akinjogbin: "...it is clear that the author is not an academic man and therefore I submit that it is not a high literary standard that has attracted so many European and American readers...Most English-men, and perhaps, Frenchmen, are pleased to believe all sorts of fantastic tales about Africa, a continent of which they are profoundly ignorant." While expressing anxiety that Tutuola's books will match the stereotypical image of Africa held by European readers, Akinjogbin remarks that Tutuola's books

"show no marks of possible future development and which at best are incapable of giving accurate information about Africa (or Nigeria for that matter)." [26]

Within this stream of attacks and counter-attacks emerges a third tradition. This consists of new critics from across the globe including Soviet critics, who reappraise and reevaluate Tutuola's style, folkloric motifs and the genre in which he writes. All these critics from the three traditions are unanimous in their position that Tutuola's works are the result of exceptional imagination fueled by folk beliefs. The American Harold Collins, in concluding his 1961 article "Founding A National Literature: The Ghost Novels of Amos Tutuola," states that "Amos Tutuola of Abeokuta deserves to be called the founder of Nigerian literature."[27] V.S Naipaul, on the other hand, dismisses Tutuola's *The Brave African Huntress*, saying "were it not for the difficult language, the book could be given to children."[28]

Soviet critics like Victor Beilis, Vladimir Vavilov and Irina Nikiforova follow the line of denigration. Like Nikiforova, Beilis rejects the idea that Tutuola's stories can be classified within the prose genre. Instead of being called novels, he argues that they should be likened to the Russian *lubok* (popular literature of low literary quality). In *Proza Nigerii*, V.N Vavilov begins his introduction to the book with a reference to Amos Tutuola and his first published book, *The Palm Wine Drinkard*. *Proza Nigerii* traces the development of the Nigerian novel. In dissociating Tutuola's pioneering work of 1952 and thereafter from Nigerian English Language Literature, Vavilov maintains that 1952 is the "vekha" (branch) and not the "nachalo" (root) of the journey to the formulation of Nigerian English language literature.Vavilov traces this beginning to the birth of the Nigerian intelligentsia. [29]

Reflecting on the literary weakness of the author and his works, the American Paul Neumakt comments that "Tutuola is caught in a literary cul-de-sac, much against his own conscious intentions."[30] As I have hinted at earlier, a common denominator, or perhaps, point of attraction to Tutuola by all these critics is that his works are a result of unparalleled imagination nourished by folk materials. It is not the purpose of this thesis to evaluate Beilis conception that the vastness of the author in the reading of other literary texts qualifies his works as a literary genre. Nor is it important to amplify the Sudanese Taban Lo Liyong's defense of Tutuola, who capitalizes "imagination" at the end of his essay on the "messenger-turned author," as a *sin qua non* needed in an artist. [31]

What is of concern is to trace the source of this unique imagination *vis a vis* the folklore motifs fuelling it and analyze how the author has managed to entrench this into the written literature. Some of the criticisms offered on the folklore motifs serve as a pointer to my thesis. But on a general note, I have adopted to classify all these approaches including plot summaries and moralizing appraisals as the surface structure while the deep structure will be analyzed later on in this chapter.

## Yoruba Spiritual Lore and Amos Tutuola

The task of uncovering the deep structure of Tutuola's themes which are rooted in the Yoruba spiritual lore will require an extensive overview of the "what", "who", "how" and "when" of Yoruba. The Yoruba people are mostly concentrated in Western Nigeria and in some part of the Republic of Benin. Anthropological speculations suggest that given "linguistic and cultural clues, some Yoruba may have left Egypt as early as 1000 B.C. and migrated along the North African coast to Tripolitania and then turned south across

the Sahara trade routes and so reached the region of the Niger."[32] Although the Yoruba are spread all over Tropical Africa, they are mostly concentrated in Western Nigeria. In this study, I will focus mainly on the Yoruba of Nigeria, being Tutuola's original home.

Although, not directly within the confines of this study, I should perhaps echo John Ferguson's outline of the three main social characteristics of this ethnic enclave :(1) extraordinary hospitality and social politeness (2) great regard for cleanliness (3) a certain deviousness and cautiousness of general approach : a delight in ambiguity of language, a slowness to take action combined with a remarkable decisiveness when action is there to be taken.[33] These social traits are combined with the Yoruba worldview (discussed below) to define the Yoruba man of the modern age. And this in turn will provide a better insight into Tutuola's quest into the realm of the supernatural.

Part of the Yoruba belief in the supernatural can be traced within the social practices of life. In his *The Ritual Process*, the great anthropologist, Victor Turner follows the line of thought in *The Rites of Passage* by the Dutch anthropologist, Arnold Van Gennep.Turner articulates the ritual process as ceremonies often performed to mark the transition of a man from one stage of life or social category to the other.[34] This he terms the *liminal* state. The Yoruba of Nigeria also attach supernatural significance to this space-in-between. At pregnancy, the Ifa divinatory oracle must be consulted and appropriate rituals performed before pregnancy is announced.[35] One important aspect of the birthing process as reflected in Tutuola's themes is the belief in reincarnation. Once the child is born, it is examined carefully to determine which ancestor is reincarnated. Hence, the name, Babatunde (if a boy), or Yetunde (if a girl).

Another important element in this stage is the Yoruba concept of *Abiku*, which gains substantial recognition in the title and theme of two great African writers: the 1986 Nobel Prize Winner in literature, the Nigerian Wole Soyinka, who is also a Yoruba man, and J.P Clark, an Ijaw man but a Yoruba scholar from the middle belt region of Nigeria. Both authors titled their poem *Abiku* and explore the Yoruba traditional belief in it. The Abiku is a weakling which dies in the first week after birth.[36] He is not regarded as a real child, but a fierce spirit that forces itself into the womb of the mother during pregnancy and after birth the spirit decides to go back to the wild, leaving the hitherto happy parents in endless grief. This pattern is part of the deep structures in Tutuola to which many critics have not given consideration.

Similarly, the same pattern can still be noticed in today's Yoruba or Nigerian video film. In this case, men and women of the underworld or the spirit world can decide to punish a "mortal" man who perhaps has committed an offence when one of them transformed into an earthly personality on a mission. A familiar spirit is then sent to his family especially when a pregnant woman is present, carries out his mission and then dies and goes back to the spirit world. That is why pregnant women are restricted from going into the forest or near trees to prevent the malicious spirit taking over their real pregnancy.

Marriage is the most important stage in a man's life. Yoruba traditional marriage is a complex ritual. One important aspect of marriage that relates to my theme here is the fact that the oracle must be consulted to decipher if the suitor is the right man for the bride .It is believed that the suitor is ordained by the god Orunmila himself, who speaks through the Ifa oracle. The next transition stage is death.[37] One can find some parallels with

Gogol's Ukraine in the Yoruba practice. For instance, when a man dies, food and tobacco are buried with him so he does not go hungry to the underworld. If this is not done and he becomes hungry, the Yoruba believe that he may turn to a wandering ghost. Suffice it to say that like in the Ukrainian funeral practice discussed in chapter 2, the Yoruba believe in afterlife.

The throwing away of the dead man's personal god known as Eshu (his devil), follows immediately after the burial. The Eshu is a vital protective force for the man against all evil spirits coming to the house. Here, we find another striking parallel in the Yoruba traditional belief with the Ukraine.Eshu[38] can simply be compared with, like explained in chapter 2, the Ukrainian *domovik*, the house spirit that protects against evil spirits.[39]

Ontological Belief, Religion and the Yoruba of Today

Two main aspects of the Yoruba oral tradition function extensively in Tutuola's creative works. These are Yoruba ontological philosophy and religion. The latter is a transcending element that continues to define the psych of the Yoruba of yesterday, today and tomorrow. The Yoruba concept of origin is intricately linked to their religion, which is fundamentally the belief and worship of a pantheon of deities. My submission in this section will depend to a large extent on the ethnographic accounts by distinguished scholars on Yoruba and African world view. Reverend Geoffrey Parrinder is second to none among these anthropologists. His 1967 book, *African Mythology* is a *curtain raiser* that has brought into focus African myths, legend, spirit and religion in the host of world mythologies.

Reverend Professor Bolaji Idowu, a student of Parrinder, the son of an Ogun priest,[40] was the first patriarch of the Methodist Church of Nigeria and the first African professor of comparative religion. Idowu narrows his research down to the Yoruba world with his 1962 book, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief.* A. B. Ellis pioneered the research into the Yoruba people with his 1894 book, *The Yoruba Speaking Peoples*. This book was republished in 1970. In 1970, John Ferguson follows the lead of Idowu and Ellis in dedicating a book to Yoruba concern: *The Yorubas of Nigeria*. The last but not the least is Jan Knappert in his *Kings, Gods and Spirits from African Mythology* (1986).Although there is little variation typical of the oral tradition on which they relied as their source, all these writers are unanimous in their account of creation as viewed by the Yoruba.[41] They have all regarded it as the myth of creation.

It is important to briefly reflect on the concept of myth given its various interpretations which have in a way tried to divorce its semantic connotation from what is deemed to be real. Often times the concepts of myth and legend vacillate with that of history. However, it is perhaps vital to say that scholars have succeeded in separating myth and legend from history and have adopted a monotonous use of the concept of myth especially when a view they do not share is their subject of investigation. This dialectics may have descended from Aristotelian principle. For instance, Aristotle describes myth as *fantasized* reality and history as *factual* reality.[42]

In the "Polemical introduction" to his great book, *Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye concludes that the difference between history and legend is "the presence of [...] scientific element."[43] It thus means the presence of scientific investigation qualifies history to be in close proximity with reality while legend and myth cannot be taken

literarily as true. As if to denigrate further, Parrinder refers to myths as "philosophy in parables."[44] From the standpoint of Frye's scientific explanation as the distinguishing factor between history and legend (and myth), my argument here is that all these can be placed on the condition of half-truth. It may be too broad a generalization to posit that most written history derive their primary source from oral tradition. But it is almost possible to say that history's fundamental motif is derived from oral source. The historian adopts a scientific technique in recording history as narrated to him. In the same vein, anthropologists and ethnographers rely on oral narration of the myth and legend they put in print with scientific models.

A common compromise to which Frye and Parrinder subscribe is that myths are the people's explanation to the concept of being, origin, ritual practices, gods, beliefs, and religion.[45] The word "explanation" may be too weak to describe the relationship of the traditional folk community to "myth". "Explanation" becomes a solid term when it is added to belief. Parrinder approaches the optimal description when he says all myths must be taken into account since they are "values which the society holds dear."[46] Since history enjoys the status of a canonical truth, what is myth to the investigating scientist is history to his investigated local subjects. This principle conforms to the description of Yoruba ontological belief.

The pre-Christian, pre-colonial Yoruba traditional society holds as dear their belief and theory of creation as do exponents of the biblical ontological narrative that intersects it. So to the Yoruba, the account of creation is as real as the religion that goes in tandem with it. And this, like Knappert notes, is linked to the origin of their own tribe.[47] Olodumare, the Supreme God has a cabinet of ministers in heaven. These ministers who

are gods in their own right are known as *Orisha* (divinities) in Yoruba cosmology. Olodumare sent one of his ministers, *Orisha-nla* (the great god) or in modern parlance, the prime minister of his cabinet and Oduduwa, Olodumare's son to descend the earth for creative purposes.

The two messengers descend from heaven by means of a palm tree extending from heaven to earth, which was filled with water.[48] While Orisha-nla (also known as Obatala) decides to tap and drink a whitish palm wine from the palm tree, Oduduwa descends to the bottom. Since the earth was filled with water, Oduduwa opens the bag they brought from heaven, sprays some white sand on the water, and lets out the hen from the same bag, which walks on a dry land the sand has formed. Then he empties out all the black earth in the bag and the hen helps to spread the earth across the water with legs and this is how land is made and the work of creation is begun by Orisha-nla.

Meanwhile, Olodumare sends another of his ministers, Orunmila, to give counsel to Orisha-nla on the great mission.Orunmila is an embodiment of wisdom and divinity of the Supreme God. The chameleon was sent to inspect if the land was wide enough. And this is why the land is called Ife, which could be translated literarily to mean "wide". This land is today a city known as Ile Ife (house of Ife), which is a few miles away from Abeokuta, Tutuola's home town. It is noteworthy that the surrounding towns and cities to Ife, including Abeokuta and Osun-Osogbo are still the most prominent centers of traditional Yoruba worship and beliefs.

This region of the Yoruba land is today known as Ogun State (province). But as a result of modern political divisions, Ife and Oshogbo have been included in a new state, Osun. Tutuola's town, Abeokuta, is the capital of Ogun State. "Ogun" can have two

semantic derivatives: Ogun as god of iron and *ogun* as traditional medicine, or in Tutuola's parlance, *juju* .To the Yoruba, Ile Ife is the cradle of being and civilization and Oduduwa, who became the first King of Ife, is known as the progenitor of the Yoruba .Oduduwa gives birth to Oranmiyan, who in turn gives birth to seven other children. The seven children established the seven kingdoms of the pre-colonial Yoruba land.Oranmiyan did not die but simply disappeared into a cave rock, which is still regarded as a sacred place in Ife.This study is less concerned with a detailed account of how the ministers of Olodumare became the pantheon of deities which is the object of Yoruba religion.

For the purpose of this chapter, it is important to point out certain links between the account of creation and the religion for the purpose of this chapter. Orunmila, the embodiment of Olodumare's wisdom, is approached by the Yoruba in times of trouble especially to know what the future holds. Orunmila, "orun lo mo ila" is translated literarily to mean that "only heaven knows salvation or deliverance." He is not contacted by man directly, but through the *babalawo* (Ifa priest), the custodian of Ifa divinity.Orunmila is known to be a lover of palm wine when he had dealings with Orisha-nla. Ethnographic account has it that Orunmila could not refrain from palm-wine for too long, because he was brought up on palm-wine. This is reflected in one of the Ifa religious poems in which Orisha-nla praises the palm tree and expresses his delight and cause of his restraint from the wine in it:

> My mother was not born at Ifon.My father was not born at Eringbon .Of the palm-tree do I eat, of the palm-tree do I drink. Palm-fronds formed the direct path through which I walked into the world. It is out of compassion for the venerable father, the father of divinities that I refrained from drinking palm-wine.[49]

The above explains why it is customary for the Ifa priest to demand palm wine and palm oil from his clients each time they come for consultation. He in turn makes sacrifices to Orunmila with palm wine, palm oil, and the like. Moreover, as pointed out above, the object of worship and divinity may be the Ifa oracle to Orunmila, the god of iron and thunder, Ogun, and Songo respectively, but the indirect and unseen referent is the Supreme Being himself, the Olodumare.[50] The Yoruba believe that he knows the beginning from the end. And so life is interpreted according to his wishes and desires, and according to his injunctions.

This trait of religion as a definitive factor to life is seen in today's Yoruba attitude to life. Edward B.Tylor's famous definition of culture[51] can be inverted in the case of the Yoruba people. Instead of culture being the complex whole in which religion is a part, to the Yoruba people, religion is that complex whole which includes culture. This line of thought is to some degree, articulated by Bolaji Idowu when he ascertains the predominance of religion in Yoruba affairs:

> ...the real keynote of the life of the Yoruba is neither in their noble ancestry nor in the past deeds of their heroes. The key-note of their life is their religion. In all things they are religious. Religion forms the foundation and the all-governing principle of life for them. As far as they are concerned, the full responsibility of all the affairs of life belongs to the deity; their own part in the matter is to do as they are ordered through the priests and diviners whom they believe to be the interpreters of the will of the deity.[52]

The world-renowned historian of world culture, Toyin Falola also shares this view on Nigeria in general.[53] The Yoruba of today is ready to accept the Christian or Islamic religion because they stress the same existence of Olodumare. And so the Yoruba man

interprets every fortune and misfortune as Olodumare's wish. Every misfortune is a result of evil and supernatural forces but is yet permitted by Olodumare. For example, many a Yoruba believe that mental illness cannot be of natural causes, but of supernatural machination. In a study in 2006 carried out by 4 people from the Department of Psychiatry, Psychology, and Sociology of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, one third of the 2040 respondents attribute cause of mental illness to evil spirits and gods.[54] As I will demonstrate in the next section, this idea of religion and belief in deities with their ontological significance are the underlying, or, in Chomskian terms, deep structure of Tutuola's writings.

## Yoruba Belief System in Tutuola

In most criticism of Tutuola, two out of every three critics support the idea that Tutuola's uses of Yoruba mythology in the construction of his stories display an idiosyncratically imaginative approach. However, this is a common attitude to a writer of folk stories anywhere in the world. As I have already indicated in this chapter, the term myth has been so broadly defined that in some sense it is too weak to be used in certain contexts. One of the most plausible definitions of it is that it is a way a people explain their origin and the concept of being. What the anthropologist may refer to as myth is what the Yoruba people know as their history.

Given the extensive analysis of Yoruba ontological philosophy in the last section, I will in this chapter propose a formulation that best suits the case: the Yoruba proceeds from history to belief systems and from belief systems to religion as we have it today. Hence, instead of the term myth, I will adopt the term "belief" or "religion" in this

chapter. Anyone with an adequate acquaintance with the history and religion of Yoruba and perhaps, engages in a thorough research, will have a full grasp of the source of Tutuola's imagination.[55] For instance, Tutuola's hero- Drinkard is not ahistorical or a literary construction from empty imagination.

The historical predecessor of the Palm wine Drinkard is the god Orunmila himself who was a lover of palm wine at the beginning of creation. Orunmila, as I have explained in the last section, was one of the messengers sent by the Supreme God, Olodumare, to inspect the work of creation by Obatala and Oduduwa.All these gods descended from the heavens through the palm tree from which Obatala and Orunmila extracted the palm wine and drank. Like Obatala, Orunmila was said to be too addicted to palm wine that he could not live without it. Similarly, Tutuola's Drinkard cannot do without palm wine and he constantly attributes the source of his heroism to the fact that he is a god. This is the fundamental motif of Tutuola's creativity that remains a mystery to all of the critical study on his works. Being the son of an Ogun Priest himself, Tutuola is committed to preserving these traditional values in all his works. His basic intension is married with the basic motif of all of his ten novels and this intention is poignantly articulated in his autobiographical note:

> What was in my mind? Well. Oh…the time I wrote it, was in my mind was that I noticed that our young men, our young sons and daughters did not pay much attention to our traditional things or culture or customs. They adopted, they concentrated their minds on European things. They left our customs, so if I do this they may change their mind…to remember our custom, not to leave it to die…. That was my intention.[56]

Of course this intention is reflected in the ambitious style the author adopts in entrenching these customs and culture in his works. Every transformation or triumph of the hero or other characters is attributed to the existence of *juju* (voodoo), which is a derivative of the god Orunmila strength through the Ifa priest. As has been elucidated in the last section, the god Orunmila is literarily translated to mean 'Orun lo mo ila' (It is the heavens that know the way of salvation) and this god is the expression of the divining power and wisdom of the Supreme Being, Olodumare.The object of worship to Orunmila is the Ifa, through the priest, who, based on Orunmila's recommendation, solves his clients' problems by recommending sacrifice of all sorts and by giving them *juju*.

Therefore, all of Tutuola's historico-cultural codes, including sacrifice, gods, 'ghosts', death, afterlife, *Abiku*, Yoruba *obaship* [57] etc, stem from this fundamental belief. Throughout the narratives, the author uses these codes to explain the cause of actions and inactions. It is therefore plausible to categorize his works as etiological tales. And all of these extant but "hidden" folklore elements are what I have called the deep structures of the author's works. This view comes close to what Bernth Lindfors mean when he uses the term 'inner structure' as opposed to 'overall narrative pattern', a term used by many of Tutuola's critics. Lindfors' evidence of the inner structure in Tutuola are closing formulas: "This was why I got a wife." "That was how we were saved from the unknown creatures of the Unreturn-able-Heaven's town." He goes further to identify one of numerous etiological endings: "So that since the day that I had brought Death out from his house, he has no permanent place to dwell or stay, and we are hearing his name about in the world."[58]

Lindfors' inner structure, according to him, is typical of oral tradition of folktale common in West Africa. However, the deep structures in Tutuola go beyond closing formulas and etiological endings. They involve the author's conscious effort to explain the unusual typical of fantastic tales, with the Yoruba belief in the supernatural. The underlining motif of this is the Yoruba ontological history, philosophy and religion. The hero in Tutuola's first book: The Drinkard is a variant of the archetype, god of wisdom, Orunmila, a lover of palm wine. Since Obatala is said to have almost the same measure of love for palm wine, Tutuola perhaps decides to bestow on his hero Obatala's image and authority within the bastion of gods.

It should be remembered that Obatala, also named Orisha-nla (chief god) exercised unlimited control over all the earth on the orders of the Olodumare, the Supreme God. Hence, Tutuola's Drinkard unveils his immortal attribute whenever he is faced with an obstacle and ascribes the source of his victory to his godlike nature and possession of 'juju'. For instance, when he meets the old man who himself is a god and who asks him what his name is, the hero 'replied that my name was "father of gods" who could do everything in this world,....'[59] The old man then sends the hero to go get something from Death as a condition for helping the hero find his dead palm wine tapster.

Just as the devil is humanized in Gogol's narratives; death is humanized in Tutuola's narratives. The wisdom of this imagination is that, perhaps, since the Palm Wine Tapster is dead, the best advice for the Palm Wine Drinkard is to die in his quest for the Tapster by meeting Death. However, the hero's battle with and triumph over Death in the latter's house further gives credence to the superiority of his supernatural attributes. [60] The hero-narrator in most cases appears to be helping his readers to understand the reason behind

every unusual action. When he receives the mandate to help search for the missing daughter of the 'Head of the Town' who has been taken away by a weird 'complete gentleman', he reiterates his supernatural capability to carry out the task and once again mimics the god Orunmila with his appetite for sacrifice and palm wine :

> As I was the "Father of gods who could do anything in this world", when it was at night, I sacrificed to my juju with a goat. And when it was early in the morning, I sent for forty kegs of palm-wine, after I had drunk it all, I started to investigate whereabouts was the lady. As it was the market day, I started the investigation from the market. But as I was a juju-man, I knew all the kinds of people in that market [61]

As the father of all gods, the hero could find the missing lady. As a juju-man, he has the omniscient characteristic to know all the people in the market. The adverbial clause of reason "as I was…", or "as he was…" or "as they were…" etc, resonates with Yoruba supernatural elements like juju, 'ghosts' (spirits), gods, Abiku (reincarnation), etc, throughout all of Tutuola's works.

Unlike in Gogol and in most fantastic tales, physical transformation of Tutuola's characters is often accompanied with the reason why it's possible: "…then I used one of my juju which changed me into a lizard and I followed him."[62] "When we entered the river, I commanded one juju which was given me by a kind spirit who was a friend of mine and at once the juju changed me into a lizard."[63] Many episodes suggest that the author may in fact be consciously addressing readers from a foreign culture. For example, the hero says "I changed the lady to a kitten and put her in my pocket and changed myself to a very small bird which I could describe as a 'sparrow' in English language." The weird child of the hero is a product of weird parents. The one a god, the other a ghostess.

There suddenly appears a swelling on the thumb of the hero's wife and 'within the hour that he came down from the thumb he grew up to the height of about three feet and some inches and his voice by that time was as plain as if somebody strikes an anvil with a steel hammer. Then the first thing that he did, he asked his mother: "Do you know my name?" [64] This is an element in Yoruba lore. The 'mogbon juba' translated to mean 'child wiser than his father' is a child whose physical and mental growth is contravening normal physiological process and thus is tagged a weird one that poses great threat to the wellbeing of his parents and community.

There is absolutely no doubt that the author embellishes this folk element with fantasies. For instance, the thumb of the mother's finger replaces the womb from which emerges the child. However, everything is possible given the fact that the father is an archetype of the Yoruba chief god, Orunmila or Obatala, who once had the responsibility of carrying out the work of creation. As though to ascribe every source of the unusual performed by the hero to his godlike nature and possession of *juju* (supernatural power), the hero's one-time failure to conquer his enemy through the efficacy of his transforming attribute is immediately explained by the dissipating potential of his *juju*: "As the red fish was coming out of the hole, I knew that I should kill it, but I had no juju anymore, all had become powerless from long using."[65] *Juju* then becomes a supernatural catalyst for success in Tutuola's narratives.

On Yoruba belief in the doctrine of reincarnation, the author is unwavering in directly inscribing this theme into his works. For instance, he develops the plot of his first published work, *The Palm Wine Drinkard* with this theme. The Drinkard's quest for his palm wine tapster into the Deads' Town is first motivated by the belief in reincarnation:

> When I saw that there was no palm-wine for me again, and nobody could tap it for me, then I thought within my self that old people were saying that the whole people who had died in this world, did not go to heaven directly, but they were living in one place somewhere in this world. So that I said that I would find out where my palm-wine tapster who had died was.[66]

Tutuola mimics the anthropologist in furthering his explanation on this theme. When the palm-wine loving hero finally meets his tapster in the Deads' Town, he recounts the latter's obstacles, which are a part of this belief:

> He said that after he had died in my town, he went to a certain place, which anybody who just died must go to first, because a person who just died could not come here (Deads' Town) directly. He said that when he reached there, he spent two years in training and after he had qualified as a full dead man, then he came to this Deads' Town and was living with Deads…[67]

The commonest belief among the Yoruba even today with regard to this is that someone who has just died may appear to those who don't know yet that he is dead. He may also appear invisible and unnoticed at his burial. Tutuola depicts this in the following way: 'After that, he said that he came back to my house on the very night that he fell and died at the farm and looked at everyone of us, but we did not answer, then he went away.' [68]

Moreover, the Yoruba believe in an afterlife and demonstrate this through funeral practice. For instance, the washing of the corpse is done in a way that conveys the belief that the deceased needs to be clean in order to be accepted by his ancestors and prevent him from turning to "iwin", a wandering ghost in Tutuola's parlance. (Although both Tutuola and Gogol embed culture in literature, it is however crucial to make a distinction that the tenor of culture or folklore are much more revealing in Tutuola than the tenor of "canonical" written literature. Gogol presents the contrary. That is more than in Gogol,

culture is given priority over literature in Tutuola.And this is one of the overriding findings of this thesis).

As Awolalu clearly notes, the Yoruba believe that "when the physical body dies, the spirit and that immaterial essence called soul do not perish but go to Olodumare who is the source and who disposes of the soul as he wishes."[69] However, the Yoruba do not include objects in the coffin for the deceased to make use of on his journey. This detail is fore grounded in a special way by Tutuola when Simbi is buried alive with her rich dead master. Here, one finds the author's ability to satirize the futility of life especially exemplified by wealth which has no eternal value. The Yoruba believe that a man comes into this world with nothing and will leave with nothing.Tutuola employs irony in driving home the significance of this belief when the master gets all he has including money and Simbi, his slave, in his coffin.[70]

Apart from the affirmative presentation of *juju*, reincarnation, gods etc, Tutuola devotes much attention to the concept of *Abiku*, which he directly translates to mean born-and-die baby in *The Witch Herbalist of the Remote Town*. The hero is an *Abiku*.Tutuola uses the hero-narrator to explain the fundamental underpinnings of the supernatural causative of the weakling child:

> But as I was a BORN AND DIE BABY before I was born, a special sacrifice must be prepared and taken to the same "Iroko tree", which was my former dwelling place or home from where I came into my mother's womb, before I could marry a lady. This special sacrifice was to appease my "born and die baby" folks who were still expecting me to return to them. They were still living in the same "Iroko tree" until when they would be fortunate to find wealthy mothers.[71]

Aside from the theme of sacrifice engraved into the *abiku* concept and which is discussed below, the reader will notice the seriousness of the author's basic intent from the above,

given the direct translation of the concept of *abiku* and also the capitalization of this translation.

This technique of explaining culture through a non-literary text embedded in a supposedly literary text is a vital element in understanding the deep structure of a cultural text like this. It is obvious that the aura of aesthetics, literary embellishments, entertainment and literary shell remain a secondary goal of the author. His primary goal which was announced since the time of his first published work is to sing Yoruba beliefs in the supernatural into the ears of his readers. The first few sentences of *The Brave African Huntress* stress the importance of this to the success of the hunter, who goes to the wild: "My father was a brave hunter in his town. He had hunted in several dangerous jungles which the rest hunters had rejected to enter or even to approach because of fear of being killed by the wild animals and harmful creatures of the jungle". The source of this unusual courage is the power of the supernatural: "He had plenty of super-natural powers and his gods were countless."[72] One may thus presume that Tutuola's approach to the representation of folklore in literature dismisses the cliché in literary circles that a transition from oral to the written literature is inevitably marked by remarkable structural, stylistic and thematic alterations.

Tutuola's works emphasize the significance of sacrifice in Yoruba religion. Sacrifice is a means of worship to the immortal gods by giving them what they like, for example palm oil, palm wine, blood of animals, etc.These themes appears in all of Tutuola's works. In *The Palm Wine Drinkard* for instance, it is entrenched into the Drinkard's endless thirst for palm wine. The hero-narrator tells the reader that regular sacrifice is necessary for juju and the gods to remain functional: 'As I was the "Father of gods who

could do anything in this world," when it was at night, I sacrificed to my juju with a goat.'[73]

We find the same approach to the theme of sacrifice in *Simbi and the Satyr of the Jungle*. Here, the usual divinatory practice of the Ifa oracle common among the Yoruba and generally found in most Yoruba home video films, is again not depicted, but recorded. It should be remembered that the Ifa is the god of oracle who is consulted by the *babalawo* or *iya lawo* (priest, soothsayer) on behalf of his client. The Ifa oracle is a personage of the god Orunmila, the embodiment of the wisdom of the Supreme Being. As Tutuola inscribes this practice and its process directly into the text, we again can find obvious use of his non-literary stylistic device, designed to achieve anthropological common sense. For instance the narrator recounts Simbi's visit to the *babalawo* with the intent of explaining the divinatory practice.

In doing this, the technique of explanation, through repetition and tautology, is employed: "the tray of his Ifa, the god of oracle, and the tray contained…" [74] "'You see, Simbi, the Ifa, the god of oracles says …" "But before it can be so, you ought to make two kinds of sacrifices." [75] "After you have put it down, you will kneel down before it (sacrifice), then you will start to pray for what your intention likes to know and experience."[76] The phrase, "The god of oracle" is repeated times without number, as a complement of "the ifa", in this episode. Similarly, the word "sacrifice" is a peculiar and recurring concept in Tutuola's vocabulary.

In the example above, the grammatical antecedent of "sacrifice": "it", is sufficient for the reader to understand the basic thought flow of the episode. But the author decides to further the reader's understanding with "sacrifice" in parenthesis. One thing that comes

to mind is that this technique is a consequence of the oral tradition of folktale telling. But here, the intended readers are the listeners who have little or no knowledge of the cultural code which the writer is ambitiously committed to conveying. The influence of *orature* is as plausible as the motivation of the writer to assume the position of educator of cultural knowledge.

A variant of the theme of sacrifice, which serves as the basis for native apprehension of European stereotype of a barbaric image of Africa, is human sacrifice. As I will explore in chapter three, there is a need for critics of cultural texts to contextualize cultural elements within the framework of a synchronic and diachronic analysis. This is because while such 'barbaric' elements should be given both time and space consideration in the cultural history, the case is not always the same with their entrenchment in literature. However, Tutuola's human sacrifice can be situated in space. For example, the prince killer in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* belongs to the Wrong Town, in which the inhabitants have not been depicted as purely human. Like in all the episodes of the hero's adventure into the bush, they are either ghosts or spirit beings.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the murderer of the prince is killed in the bush and his dead body is presented 'to their gods in that reserve-bush.'[77] This does not in any way portray a barbaric image. The killer is killed for committing murder and in order to appease the gods, his dead body is presented to them. We find a similar treatment of human sacrifice in *The Witch Herbalist of the Remote Town*. Here, Tutuola situates this theme in the past and also points to its eradication within the flow of history.[78] It is as though he holds the view that every culture, including the European cultures, have gone through its barbaric stage. [79]

The writer's intent has been to emphasize the significance of sacrifice in Yoruba cosmology. The chorus of sacrifice in Tutuola's plot development is brought to a climax in the subtle end of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*. The cosmic battle between Land and Heaven tells the reader that the writer is not just an imaginative person, but also an intelligent literary writer. He begins the building of tension on the return of the hero with the ritual egg given to him by his tapster in the Deads' Town. Heaven and Earth who have been good friends fight over a mouse they both hunted for, but which neither could capture.

Heaven returns to heaven and decides to punish Earth by not giving rain. And so for many years there is famine in the hero's land and people suffer and die of starvation. When the hero returns from the wild world, he commands the egg he brought from the Deads' Town to produce food and there is surplus of food in the land. Many people and kings from neighboring towns come to the Drinkard as the savior who provides food for them to live. However, food from the magic egg is merely a temporary solution while the famine lasts. The egg is broken and when reassembled, it turns out to produce whips for the people who break it. The tranquil peace found in a society largely depends on the attitude of the gods. Hence: "We stopped the famine thus: - We made a sacrifice of two fowls, 6 kolas, one bottle of palm oil and 6 bitter kolas. Then we killed the fowls and put them in a broken pot, after that we put the kolas and poured the oil in the pot..."[80] The reader should immediately notice that the whole essence of the Drinkard's adventures is neither his thirst for palm wine, nor a demonstration of the writer's wondering and wandering imaginings, but of course, the emphasis on the significance of gods and their worship through sacrifice in Yoruba religion. Moreover, the elements of

this sacrifice are in no way different from those found in the Yoruba philosophy of creation: palm oil (sometimes palm wine, derived from the palm tree through which the god Obatala descends from the heavens), fowl (which helps to spread the sand to complete the creation of the land), cola-nut (in some variants of the creation story, and deemed as a symbol of unity and prayers in Nigeria).

Unlike most other writers who write stories based on folk motifs, Tutuola does not employ uncanny mechanisms in depicting these traditional themes. There are no dream symbols or farcical elements which on the one hand could demonstrate the writer's antipathy to these beliefs, and on the other hand, denigrate their significance in the minds of those who hold them and in the minds of his readers. The only one literary element that could undermine the seriousness of the writer's themes is his somewhat naïve use of hyperbole:

> So my father gave me a palm-tree farm which was nine miles square and it contained 560,000 palm trees, and this palm-wine tapster was tapping one hundred and fifty kegs of palm-wine every morning, but before 2 o'clock p.m I would have drunk all of it; after that he would go and tap another 75 kegs in the evening which I would be drinking till morning. [81]

However hyperbolic this may sound, one could still find an explanation to it since everything is possible for the hero-god. Tutuola is a serious, unpretentious, and faithful writer who grounds his works in folk beliefs. He uses these beliefs to advance his plots, but the reader will only notice this after a long narration, the essence of which is known with the introduction of the beliefs. A single voice is noticed in all of his narratives partly because of his naivety as a writer, and mainly because he adopts oral patterns, perhaps for the reason of effectively relating these beliefs. Hence it may be plausible to adopt the

term "record" instead of "depiction" of cultural beliefs in Tutuola's writings. Apart from his direct approach to their 'depiction', he helps his reader to understand these themes with the use of parenthesis and sometimes boring tautology, attributes of oral folktale narration.

Aside from his comment on the god of iron that he "had been well known throughout the Yoruba land, in Western Nigeria," and his role as "the protector of the blacksmiths, the supporter of the soldiers, hunters, and the ironmongers" in *Ajaiyi and His Inherited Poverty,* [82] Tutuola proceeds to a full explanation on the complexity of this pantheon in the Feather *Woman of the Jungle.*[83] He uses place names like Abeokuta, Ede and Ile Ife, which is the cradle of Yoruba civilization. Here the hero-narrator assumes the position of a native in the service of the ethnographer or anthropologist. He carefully recounts his adventure to this historic town in a way that mimics the account of an ethnographer.

Yoruba ontological philosophy and religion, as I explained in the preceding section of this chapter, are enshrined into the narrative in a highly lucid manner. The historic wells from which spring the sun and the moon, the road through which Oduduwa travels back to heaven after giving birth to Oranmiyan who in turn gives birth to the seven kings of the seven kingdoms of Yoruba land, the Yoruba gods, their historic sites and worshippers, the conventional politeness of Yoruba young men in saluting their elders, the wonderful display of the worshipper of Songo, god of thunder and his appeasing wife, Oya, who is the goddess of river etc, are all given sufficient detail by the narrator along with explanation.

This practice of lightening and thunder as a traditional corrective institution is eloquently narrated in this work. It is common among the Yoruba that rain can be commanded by Songo worshippers who have been consulted to find and punish offenders. Again, Tutuola's technique of conveying his knowledge-enriching objective features prominently in this episode. In ensuring a better understanding of the folk concept he uses, he again utilizes parenthesis: "(Songo is male, the god of thunder, and Oya is female. So when the god of thunder vexes, his wife, Oya, appeases him with the copper)."[84]

We find the same treatment of rain making, Songo and lightening in *Simbi and the Satyr of the Dark Jungle.* I agree with Harold Collins when he adopts Northrop Frye's term that Tutuola is writing naïve quest-romances[85], I also agree with Gerald Moore who describes the Drinkard's quest as a "variant [...] of the cycle of the heroic monomyth : Departure-Initiation-Return."[86] Lindfors also notes that with *Simbi and the Satyr of the Dark Jungle*, Tutuola demonstrates the attributes of a developing writer with the display of 'definite signs of formal literary influence.'[87] One of the most radical departures in the interpretation of, for instance, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard,* is Chinua Achebe's post colonialist reading of the work. Achebe argues that the primary theme of the book is the social and ethical question and the punishment of the Drinkard for abandoning work for pleasure [88]. This critical response, one could argue, is a consequence of a critic's subjective interpretation. Considering the single voiced narrative style and special emphasis on folk elements, one would better argue that the author's primary theme is transmitting folk belief to the reader. Put differently, Achebe's textual analysis produces

a theme within the surface structure while a thorough analysis of the authorial voice and general plot development will give rise to the primary theme within the deep structure.

All these are plausible analyses of the writer's works. But the most important factor is the writer's efforts to encapsulate and convey the beliefs of the Yoruba people which are explained within the framework of history and religion. Lindfors echoes Alice Werner's report on African mythology 'that stories of people who have penetrated into the world of ghosts and returned "are not uncommon" and that shape-shifting transformations are not only present in many folktales but also "are believed in as actual occurrences at the present day.' Here one should recall the story of the Yoruba singer and actor, Chief Hubbert Ogunde, who was said to have lived under the sea for seven years and returned enriched with supernatural powers.[89]

As if anticipating an illustration of Werner's report, Lindfors comments: "Thus *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, a lineal descendant of Yoruba oral tradition, hails from a large family of West African oral narratives."[90] This misconception and erroneous conclusion is a result of lack of adequate scrutiny of the deep structure of the text. Although the story of the magic drum in one collection of African myths and legends may have been Tutuola's source for the magic egg which at first is a provider of food and later a punisher of those who break it, The *Palm-Wine Drinkard* is neither a mere lineal descendant of Yoruba oral tradition, nor does it hail from a large family of West African oral narratives.[88] The work, like all of Tutuola's works, is a product of imagination fueled by Yoruba ontological philosophy, history and religion. The Drinkard himself has no other variant in West Africa, or in Yoruba folk stories. He is a variant of the archetypal god, Orunmila or Obatala, ministers of the Supreme Being, Olodumare, who remains the

concrete central image of Yoruba beliefs and religion even today. It is the conveying of this belief which remains the writer's motivation until the end of his writing career.

## CHAPTER 2. UKRAINIAN SPIRITUAL LORE AND NIKOLAI GOGOL

### Nikolai Gogol: Life, Works and Critical Reception

The history of Gogol's ancestry seems to bear on his uncanny creativity and depiction of reality. This history draws attention to his Ukrainian identity, Polish blood and Russian literary affiliation. Moreover, the circumstances surrounding his birth and childhood seem to be the remote catalyst for the author's rise to greatness. Today, both from within and without the Russian literary tradition, Nikolai Gogol is regarded as the father of Russian prose. (Even the Great Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin, as I will mention in this chapter, became fond of his early prose). One of the many scholars on Gogol is Vsevolod Setchkarev. He gives a precise image of how ancestral origin determined social identity in the pre-1653 Ukraine.[91]

Setchkarev notes that proof of ancient nobility not only allowed a Ukrainian landowner to escape serfdom but also entitled him to possess both land and serfs. Thus many a Ukrainian sought to establish his origin as the descendant of Polish gentry. Andrey Gogol/Hohol was said to have served in Mogilev as a colonel and was rewarded with landed property by the Polish King John Sobieski in 1674. Andrey's descendants were mainly priests, among who was Gogol's great grandfather, the village priest Demyan, who "was the first to add to the polonized first name of his clergyman father Yan, the surname Yanovsky …."[92] Gogol's grandfather, Afanasy, and his children called themselves Gogol-Yanovsky. Nikolai Gogol was the first to drop this name. In *Pochva i Sudba: Gogol i ukrainskaya Literatura: U Istokov,* Yu. Barabash records Gogol's apprehension and determination to repudiate the Polish identity bestowed on him by his

great grandparents. For instance, while he is called Gogol-Yanovsky, the author swiftly rejects this identity: "Ya ni Yanovski."[93]

However, Gogol's Polish blood is derived from his matrilineal lineage. Afanasy married the daughter of a distinguished Ukrainian noble. The mother of the bride descended from old Polish nobility.[94] Our author's immediate parents – Vasily and Maria Gogol had twelve children, but only four survived early childhood. Two stillbirths preceded the arrival of Nikolai Gogol on March 20, 1809 in the little town of Sorochintsy, Poltava region of Ukraine. The author was named after Saint Nikolai because the image of this saint was located in the nearby village of Dikanka.[95] The young Gogol studied at a high school in Nezhin, from where he wrote a series of melancholic letters as a result of estrangement from his mother. These letters were later to become an integral part of scholarly sources into the author's worldview.

"The mysterious dwarf,"[96] as he was called by his fellow students, was given to wanton clowning, a habit which metamorphosed into theatrical talent. From clowning to comedy, partly influenced by his father's comic writings, Gogol grew to become an enthusiastic entertainer to his teachers and fellow students. This habit often led to disturbing and punishable offences. For instance, an extract from the class book reveals instances when the author's clowning and inclination to playing tricks had unpleasant consequences:

> Yanovsky received the appropriate punishment for his bad conduct…Yanovsky placed in the corner on account of indecent expressions…Yanovsky in the corner for un-cleanliness…Yanovsky without tea for stubbornness and very extraordinary laziness…Yanovsky playing with toys in the religion class- deprived of tea"… [etc., etc.] [97]

Two of his childhood experiences may help in understanding the manner in which the writer treats his themes. In the first instance when threatened with physical punishment for his misdeeds, the cunning Gogol played the role of a maniac perfectly and also pretended to be mentally ill. He was then taken to the infirmary.[98] The second was his dream experience with a cat in a fierce battle. Gogol felt that by drowning the cat, he had drowned a person.[99] These two childhood experiences will later resonate in his thematic exploration as a writer.

A growing interest in literature can be seen in Gogol's youth (unlike Tutuola in chapter 1) especially the reflection of the influence of the sentimental novel in most of his letters. This interest was later to crystallize in his first major literary attempt, *Gants Kyukhelgarten*, published in 1828. Gogol moved to St. Petersburg for a greener pasture .He met great minds like Pushkin, Zhukovsky and Pletnev, who were instrumental to his becoming a great writer. Money problem can be said to be one of the factors that made the writer. He constantly wrote to his mother for money. The earnings he received from his job as a history teacher and "tutoring assignments in distinguished houses" was not enough to alleviate this problem.

Taking advantage of the literary flourishing of St. Petersburg, Gogol wrote letters to his mother demanding information and materials on Ukrainian customs and tradition, folk tales, songs and beliefs. These serve as the fundamental materials of the *Vechera na Khutore Bliz Dikanki (Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka)*, the first part published September 1831.The second part of the stories was published in May 1832. In subsequent years, Gogol published other works some of which are not on Ukrainian themes. These include his greatest works, *Dead Souls, The Inspector General, and The Overcoat* etc.

A basic argument for my conclusion on Gogol's treatment of serious materials like the Ukrainian demonology is that no serious commitment to the accuracy of Ukrainian traditional folklore can be expected in a writer whose authorial persona is a make-up of childhood tricks playing and clowning .These elements could be said to have crystallized in the author's obsession with satire throughout his writing career. The literary device employed is an oxymoronic juxtaposition of two contrasting factors, namely the devil and satire. This is parallel to what Setchkarev calls fear and farce , the ultimate goal of which is to produce a disillusioned reader.[100] Other devices used to create this effect in the *Dikanka Tales* will be analyzed in the last section of this chapter. Problematic in this study is the question of what to describe as the deep structure in these tales: the authorial intention or Ukrainian supernatural lore?

The overshadowing effect of this comic element (authorial intention), on the serious theme of Ukrainian traditional life can be identified in the earliest critical reception of it by the likes of Alexander Pushkin, V.G. Belinsky, A.A Grigorev and M.P. Pogodin. For instance, Pushkin was particularly intrigued and drew the attention of the reading public to it. The reason for his enthusiasm was not because of the difference which the Ukrainian themes bring to Russian awareness, but the uniqueness of these tales in extraordinary humor suitable to entertain the Russian audience. Pushkin noted the *naborshiki* (typesetters) almost perished with laughter when the work was being printed. Grigorev praises the work for its *yumor naroda.*[101] Finally, in a letter to V.A. Zhukovsky, Gogol himself traces the source of this extraordinary humor in the *Vechera* to his high school days and describes it as his basic motivation:

> «...Еще бывши в школе, чувствовал я временами расположение к веселостии, надоедал товарищам неуместными

> шутками. Но это были временные припадки, вообще же я был характера скорее меланхолического и склонного к размышлению. Впоследствии присоединились к этому болезнь и хандра. И эти-то самые болезнь и хандра были причиной той веселости, которая явилась в моих первых произведениях: чтобы развлекать самого себя, я выдумывал без дальнейшей цели и плана героев, становил их в смешны положения – вот происхождение моих повестей!... Еще одно обстоятельство: мой смех вначале был добродушен; я совсем не думал осмеять что-либо с какой-нибудь целью, и меня до такой степени изумляло, когда я слышал, что обижаются и даже сердятся на меня целые сословия и классы общества...» [102]

This statement elucidates the reason for the rare combination of farce and fear. The authorial persona is explicitly manifested through writing. There existed in the writer a childhood desire for estrangement from a natural melancholy by amusing colleagues with jokes. This panacea for emotional *bolezn* (illness) is transposed into the writing of the *Dikanka Tales* for further healing.

To put it more succinctly, aside from the monetary aggrandizement, Gogol has a dual intent with the tales: to attain self-healing by amusing his readers. From a holistic point of view, this intent serves as the overriding motif of all his writings. Rozanov argues for this position as the "true source of Gogol's grotesque fictional world." He authenticates the source of his argument in the third of Gogol's four letters on *Dead Souls*: "I have already rid myself of much filth by transferring it to my heroes, mocking it in them, and forcing others to laugh at it also."[103] As Moyle notes, Gogol's approach to reality has been a subject of attack by contemporary critics like Shevyrev, Bulgarin and Senkovsky who "questioned the accuracy of his representations and considered them products of a conscious, albeit dubious, artistic design." This opinion is later summarized by Rozanov: "Gogol's art contained only caricatures that did not resemble life at all."[104]

Given this uncanny situation, the serious theme of fear as projected by Ukrainian belief in the supernatural thus loses its potency.

## Ukrainian Belief in the Supernatural

The fundamental material of Gogol's *Dikanka Tales* is Ukrainian traditional folklore. This thesis focuses only on his treatment of spiritual or supernatural lore in his tales. Hence, in this chapter, I will give a sketchy outline of some of many Ukrainian beliefs in the supernatural as germane to the *Dikanka Tales*. The degree of scholarly interest in Ukrainian folklore provides a valuable resource interesting ties between Gogol's stories and Ukrainian folklore. This body of knowledge has made it possible for the few compromises this chapter has adopted on Gogol's affinity to Ukrainian folklore. For instance, Gogol's claim that *Viy* is a product of folklore has constantly been repudiated by scholars.[105]

On the other hand, in 1989, Linda Invanits records an ethnographic account from the Tula Province which almost exactly resembles the episode of the metaphysical encounter between the dead witch and the philosopher Khoma.[106] Moreover, Gogol's humanization of the devil, that is, the manifestation of both a corporeal and incorporeal devil, has been considered as a mere product of the writer's imagination. But in the course of the research for this thesis, I discovered contrary evidence to it. A student of Ukrainian Canadian Folklore at the University of Alberta in 1983 records an account from her grandfather on how in olden times Christmas Eve was celebrated in Lviv Voivodeship

> On Christmas morning [Eve]…The young people organize teams to go caroling. Three kings, an angel, and a devil are chosen, and they go caroling with five people dressed like

> this. This is called "shopka".The devil's role was to look for something to steal. The youngsters would run after him and try to grab his tail.[107]

Apart from the reminiscences of young people caroling in *A May Night and the Drowned Maiden*, Gogol's devil is not dissimilar to the above: he is humiliated and often described by his tail. One could then posit that Gogol's devil is a derivative of this light *vertep* theater tradition. Whatever the sources of his inspiration, it is evident that Gogol was part of the creative force of what is today called Russian or Ukrainian culture.Oleh Ilnytskyj, rightly articulates this when he approaches a nationalist analysis to Gogol's Ukrainian themes.[108]

In a holistic sense, Gogol made Ukrainian folk tradition his raw material, processed it with his lively imagination and produces an unusual result largely informed by his idiosyncratic neuroses. As I will analyze later on in this chapter, most of the folkloric imageries and cultural practices lose their symbolic potency in the writer's aesthetics. A few of these beliefs are extant in many East Slavic folktales[109] while many of them are ethnographically recorded thanks to scholarly interest in Ukrainian folklore.

With variations defined by regions, belief in the supernatural is a commonplace among Ukrainians. Events in the physical are often interpreted as a direct manifestation of what happens in the metaphysical realm. Orthodox Christianity stands both in tandem with and in opposition to pagan beliefs. Evil and good to mankind are predetermined by the outcome of the battle between Christ and his sign of the Cross on one hand, and on the other hand, the world of the spirit including witches (*ved'mi*), sorcerers, *Rusalki* (mermaids), the *domovik*, (house spirit), the *leshii* (forest spirit), the *polevoi* (spirit of the

farm stead), the *vodianoi* (water spirit) etc.[110] "The house spirit in his behavior not only follows that of the peasant, but also sets the norm for good conduct. The forest and water spirits belonging to the out-group represent malevolent forces for the peasants."[111]

The Rusalki, in Kononenko-Moyle's words, are "lost human souls and are thus much more than mere water spirits."[112] Kononenko follows the line of thought by Zelenin, who opines that Rusalki are the feminine version of unquiet death. What this means is that people who die unnatural death wander around the earth as malevolent spirits and the *Rusalka* is one of them. The devil abducts children and gives them to *Rusalki*, who train them and they in turn become *Rusalki*, if female. This belief is portrayed by Gogol with the drowned maiden turning into a *Rusalka* in *A May Night or the Drowned Maiden*. The belief in supernatural spirits is strongly influenced by the Christian church.[113] The consequence, and perhaps evidence of these beliefs in Ukrainian cosmology, as in most other cultures, can be explained by a mystic dimension to ritual practice.

The term ritual has been a subject of profound studies among cultural anthropologists, sociologists and folklorists. Ritual is an important ceremony used to mark a transition in a man's life from one stage to the other. In 1908, the Dutch anthropologist, Arnold Van Gennep styles it "Rite of passage".[114] These rites or rituals include wedding, childbirth, and funeral ceremonies. A traditional evaluation of these rituals by non-participants and outsiders has been to see them as mere aesthetic events marking social structure. However, in recent times, scholarly endeavors have stressed, especially with the discipline of symbology, the need to create cognitive tendencies on the symbolic significance of rituals within non-participants. And given the general view

that a symbol is something that stands for something other than itself, awareness has been created that in rituals there exists a *liminal*, transitory point in which there is a connection between the physical and the metaphysical, the mystical, the spiritual, based on individual culture, cosmological and cosmogonic beliefs of the participants of rituals.

Ritual is a 'sacred' meeting point between a man and God or his ancestors, between the living and the dead, between the mortal and immortal .It is from this broad spectrum of awareness of its supernatural significance that the discourse of space emerges. The discourse of space becomes important considering the fact that by ritual, as discussed above, it means a ceremony marking the transition from one space to the other, both in the literal (social) and metaphoric (mystical) senses. Transition, or, in Van Gennep's parlance, *passage*, is a space in itself, a space in-between spaces. It is a space in which categories are neutralized, boundaries broken, or, in Bakhtinian terms, characters inverted, a pilgrimage or preparation for a new category, position or space. This *liminal* space is also an entity in which oaths are sealed by the involvement of ancestors and gods and future blessings are ensured for the newly wed, a place of rest in the great beyond guaranteed for the dead.

Wedding and funeral are two rituals in which space is of crucial significance. Apart from the already acknowledged premise that these two represent a *liminal* space, there are physical elements which are used to convey this *liminality* as far as the symbolism of space is concerned. For instance, the door, mirror, window, towels in East Slavic lore are recognizable elements of the *liminal* space, in which certain rituals are performed in order to ensure the contact with ancestors and gods or prevent the entry of undesirable evil

spirits. The domovik (house spirit) will accept a new bride into the groom's family only if certain rituals are performed at the door of the house.

Likewise, on the death of a family member, certain other rituals are performed at the door to prevent further deaths. The bride must cut a piece from the stove, in which it is believed the domovik lives, on departing the house for her new home. The midwife (*babka*) arranges for a quick baptism and naming of a sickly infant to prevent it from being a wandering spirit should it die. Other items like *rushnyki* (towels), dance, folk song, drama and water are used as symbolic gateways linking the living to the dead, the mortal to the immortal. Among the Eastern Slavs, especially the Ukrainians and Byelorussians, *rushnyki* are so pervasive both as expression of aesthetics and as mystical symbols representing a gateway between men and their ancestors or gods, between the physical and metaphysical.

During a Ukrainian or Belarusian wedding, a *padnozhnik,* which translates to mean step on a towel is a form of *rushnyk* that the bride and groom are required to step on. The dichotomy of their symbolism – aesthetics and mysticism, is expressed with the design of tree and flowers on them, suggesting a wish for marital bliss and procreation on one hand, and with the belief that these kinds of towel serve as a gateway to the world of the dead, the ancestors and the gods. It is therefore not surprising that one form of *rushnyk* is called *nabozhnyk*, which translates to mean "on God."[115]

Belief in the existence of witches and their nocturnal activities is pervasive among Ukrainians. Witches are humans who possess supernatural powers and are malevolent in nature. They transform into several animals including frogs, horses, dogs, cats etc., in order to perpetrate their evil deeds. It is commonly believed that they transform into frogs

and milk the peasant's cow. Ivanits records a handful of folk narratives from several regions of the Eastern Slavs on sorcerers and witches. The peasants give account of instances in which the sorcerers and witches have been appeased in order to prevent them from "spoiling" their wedding ceremonies. They also reflect a vast majority of the bulk of the peasant's belief in these personages. The sorcerer transforms into a dog and kills a peasant .The witch mounts a soldier "and rides right up until the rooster crowed."[116]

Apart from the belief about the devil and his binary opposite – the Christian personages; the sorcerer, witches and other spirits; one of the most famous Ukrainian folklore elements is the fern's flower and Ivan Kupalo celebration. According to an ethnographic account, on the Eve of Ivan Kupalo (St. John's Day), a fern blooms in the forest. All buried treasures are revealed to the person who finds this flower and plucks it. It then remains for whoever wants the wealth from the fern's flower to wrestle against unclean spirits which are believed to be guarding these treasures.[117]

As I will analyze in the last section of this chapter, most of these beliefs in the supernatural and symbolic imageries are used by Gogol in his *Dikanka Tales*. What is however, of importance is how the writer uses and transforms these elements and the transformation itself. That is, I evaluate the writer's distortion or accuracy in depicting these images in his writings. My notion of deep and surface structures also applies here but in a different dimension. While I described Yoruba beliefs in the supernatural, especially belief in the pantheon as the deep structures of Tutuola's aesthetics and critical reception on his works which focus mainly on aesthetics and other literary characteristics as the surface structure, Ukrainian belief system is the deep structure of Gogol's *Dikanka Tales*. However, this inner structure of Gogol's tales is largely overshadowed by the

surface structure which is composed of authorial idiosyncrasy, evasiveness, satire, dream elements and farce. These factors will be given a detailed analysis in the last section.

Ukrainian Belief System in Gogol

There is two out of every three arguments in support of the idea that Gogol is a great evasive and irrational writer when it comes to the representation of Ukrainian belief in the supernatural. The *Dikanka Tales* are replete with a blend of opposites. This chain of binaries is explored to further close the gap between the real and the unreal. There is the preface arguing for the authenticity of the reality and a reality clouded by unreal tendencies. There is the narrator castigating disbelief in the supernatural and a narrative identifying with the disbelief. There is both a distinction and a confluence of night and day, dream and reality, farce and fear, evil and good, seen and unseen, the physical and metaphysical.

The juxtaposition of all these contrasting factors forms the artistic height of the *Dikanka Tales*. However, this technique also buries the symbolic significance of the folklore imageries from which the stories are crafted. This the author unwittingly achieves, apart from the factors mentioned above, by his simple disregard for details. In most romantic, sentimental and fantastic writings, a tradition our author follows, the natural law of gravity is violated without explainable reason. Gogol is distinct in that while he never gives details on why the unusual occurs in his stories, he prefaces the two volumes of the *Vechera,* explaining through the voice of the Bee Keeper, Rudy Panko, that the source is the Ukrainian belief system.

Similarly, apart from the infusion of ukrainianisms, there is the unconventional use of elaborate footnotes in a supposed collection of "folktales". This further underscores the

writer's intention to "authenticate" the motif and motives of his tales as Ukrainian folklore. But the manner, in which these beliefs are presented, apart from producing the intended 'disillusioned reader', greatly suggests the writer's own antipathy to them. His antipathy to the beliefs is expressed in, among other factors I have mentioned, the use of multiple narrators, which mimics Bakhtinian multiple voices.

Moreover, topical prefatory phrases are employed to authenticate the folklore source of the tales and songs used in them. These include "From an old ballad", "From a little Russian comedy" "Kotlyarevsky, The Aneid", "A True Story Told by the Sexton". With the somewhat cacophonic garnering of all these devices, there is thus an estrangement of the author from the beliefs shared by the Ukrainian people about whom he writes. I shall analyze below some of the devices as they downplay the supernatural significance of the folklore materials used.

## Farce

From a literary point of view, a farce can be described as an overblown comedy since its overriding motive is to produce laughter. Most of Gogol's characterization and plot development in the *Dikanka Tales* are farcically inclined. In the last section of this chapter I trace the folklore source of a seen devil who steals the moon in his pocket in Gogol's tales. The idea of farcical ridicule is extant in Gogol's general characterization. For instance, in building a supposedly virtuous character for Foma Grigorievich in the preface to the first volume, Gogol, through the narrator, Rudy Panko, pretends to present him as a serious character. But through the use of a ridiculing irony, Foma is dropped to the same level with other farcical characters:

> Foma Grigorievich? He never wears one of those coarse

> dressing gowns that you so often see on village sextons; no, if you go to see him, even on working days, he will always receive you in a gabardines of fine cloth of the color of cold potato mash, for which he paid almost six Rubles a yard at Poltava. As for his high boots, no one in the village has ever said that they smelled of tar; everyone knows that he rubs them with the very best fat, such as I believe many a peasant would be glad to put in his porridge.[118]

This aura of farce pervades *The Fair at Sorochintsy* and will later subdue the significance of fear that should normally accompany the treatment of supernatural elements in the rest of the *Ukrainian Tales*. *Viy* is the most astute example in which aspects of Ukrainian demonology are treated with extremely farcical narrator, narrative and characters. For instance, the episode of the "philosopher" Khoma and the witch is deliberately intended to produce a laughing reader.

Likewise, the episode of his battle with the dead witch, though it reflects a Ukrainian funeral practice, is funny. In *St.John's Eve*, the narrator strongly defends belief in the evil eye, witches and their element of control by the Christian community, the sign of the cross. But he himself can be seen as a laughable character considering the manner of the presentation of his argument and the mode of his expression against the educated fellows who do not share the folk belief:

> I know there are lots of smart fellows who scribble in law courts and read even modern print, though if you put in their hands a simple prayer book they could not read a letter of it, and yet they are clever at grinning and mocking! Whatever you tell them they turn into ridicule…I dropped a word about witches one day, and there was a crazy fellow who didn't believe in witches…I have lived all these long years and have met unbelievers who would tell a lie at confession as easily as I'd take a pinch of snuff, but even they made the sign of the cross in terror of witches.[119]

Here, a serious subject matter: belief in witches, from a supposedly serious character, is trivialized from a reader's perspective simply through the manner of its presentation in a way that shows the narrator is overwhelmed by this. Already the image of the narrator himself as a farcical character has been projected in the preface of the two volumes. Moreover, a remarkable aspect of Ukrainian folklore is presented with the episode involving Basavriuk, Petro and the witch. This is the tradition of the fern's flower on the Eve St. John's Eve, as I explained in the above.

It is noteworthy that Gogol titles this story *St. John's Eve* particularly for conveying this important folklore tradition. In the deep forest, Basavriuk, the devil, makes good his promise to Petro of a sudden wealth to enable him suitable enough to marry his master's daughter. Petro catches sight of the fern and a small flower begins to grow red in it. He throws it away on the orders of Basavriuk and the flower floats in the air. A hound appears to him, which later transforms into a cat and then an old witch. The witch asks the hero to dig the holes where the flower lies and there he finds buried treasure. But a prize must be paid for the treasure. The witch demands that the hero beheads his would-be brother in-law, Ivas. Enchanted by the treasures, the hero kills Ivas. Ethnographic accounts of this tradition do not mention a huge treasure, but Gogol's narrative does. Korzh finally gives his daughter in marriage to the now wealthy Petro.

The wedding between Pidorka and Petro seems to last longer than their marriage. The latter soon falls ill from the murder of his brother in-law and the end is expectedly tragic. Within this episode of a tragic flow, several cultural signals are transmitted, including consulting a sorcerer and the pouring of wax into water for spiritual healing. The wedding ceremony is a typical Ukrainian wedding with all the symbolism and

practices. But the farcical element foregrounds the seriousness of the cultural codes and beliefs. For instance, one notices the comic peculiarity of the narrator in a way that suggests the reader should not be too engrossed with the seriousness of these supernatural themes: "In an instant, where the cat had stood was an old hag wrinkled like a baked apple and bent double, her nose and chin meeting like the tongs of a nutcracker."[120]

Another peculiar trait one notices is that while supernatural elements like the wax ritual and sorcerer, are synthesized into the story as though they were part of an imaginative force, Gogol is so laconic and meticulous in the description of a Ukrainian wedding. He gives details of the changes in the style of dressing and other practices by presenting the old and the new wedding practices. Suffice it to say that the author gives appreciable attention to folklore elements with merely social significance and tries as much as possible to separate himself from their supernatural significance. This attitude to the metaphysical dimension of Ukrainian cosmology is expected to be transferred to the reader when again the farcical features to demean the seriousness of the theme of the supernatural, first by the episode of the fern's flower with the murder of Ivas and finally the tragic end of the couple:

> My God! One laughed till one held one's sides…An amusing incident happened to my grandfather's aunt who was at that wedding herself…The devil prompted someone to splash vodka over her from behind; another one, it seems, was just as clever: at the same moment he struck a light and set fire to her…The flame flared up; the poor aunt, terrified, began flinging off all her clothes before everybody [….] The din, the laughter, the hubbub that arose- it was like a fair.In fact, the old people had never remembered such a merry wedding. [121]

## Fiction and Reality

The *Dikanka Tales* are a work of fiction built around what the author seems to consider as perceived reality in Ukrainian cosmology. But there seems to be a synthesis of the aspect of Ukrainian demonology even in the writer's fictional narrative. Here again, an uncanny depiction of a cultural phenomenon is enhanced by the plot development. This is the belief in witchcraft. In a previous research; I explored Ukrainian belief in witches and their transformative subjects. In each of the ten Ukrainian Tales surveyed, namely *The Fair at Sorochintsy*, *St. John's Eve, A May Night or the Drowned Maiden, The Lost Letter, Christmas Eve, A Terrible Vengeance, Ivan Fiodorovich Shponka, Old World Landowners, Viy* and *the Tale of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich;* there is inscribed the discourse of witch either as a lexical expression of grotesque beliefs, or a sub-plot, a main plot and as a climactic element.

In three of them, namely *St. John's Eve, A May Night and Old-World Landowners*, the witch-cat element is used as a major plot developer or as an integral part of the narrative action, which builds suspense and leads to what one may refer to the success of each story. I identify here two forms of confusion of reality with fiction. Since Gogol presents his tales as a projection of Ukrainian folklore even though his overriding motivation is farce, the reader would expect to accept the tales as an ethnographic source for Ukrainian cosmology.

However, as Karkup notes in "Gogol's Research on Ukrainian Customs for the Dikanka Tales", there is a great discrepancy in the portrayal of folklore in the writer's literary exploration. One of them I noticed in my previous research is the forceful association of the witch and cat, the latter being the only transformative subject of the

former. In all the instances where a witch transforms into another subject in the tales, this subject is always a cat. On the contrary, ethnographic accounts on Ukrainian folklore rarely acknowledge this association.

A case of an outright rejection of it stems from my three-hour interview with 73-year old Stasyuk Sofia Maksymivna referred to earlier. On the belief in the connection between the witch and the cat, Sofia was firm, despite my repetition of the question already pre-programmed by Gogol's writings, in uttering her "Ne viriat Ukraiintsi!" (Ukrainians don't believe there is a connection between the cat and the witch). However, according to her, Ukrainians believe that there are witches and they impersonate frogs, not cats. The cat, she continued, is believed to give both positive and negative omens. When people have black cats at home, it indicates they will not be afraid of anything and they are ready to challenge destiny. However, when you walk the street and the cat crosses to your right, it indicates something good will happen to you, but when a cat crosses to your left, that is a bad omen.

My interview with Svetlana Kukharenko, a Ukrainian student at the University of Alberta, who devoted her masters thesis to research in animal beliefs among Ukrainians, also endorses this argument.[122] A handful of folklore studies have analyzed East Slavic belief in the connection between the witch and animals. This means that there is a general acknowledgment of the existence of witches and their clandestine devilish activities mostly carried out when they change their human form. For example, in his expose on the devil in Russian folklore, Oinas points out that the devil [witch] has the ability to appear both as a human being and as a cat. However, Oinas lists the cat among several other

animals, including black dog, pig, horse, snake, wolf, hare, mouse, frog and magpie, which are equally transformative subjects of the witch.[123]

In Ivanits' ethnographic accounts on sorcerers and witches from 6 provinces of Russia, the witch-cat element is acknowledged only in the Tula province. The transformative subjects of the witch in other provinces are the dog, horse, and pig etc.[124] Although the witch-cat transformation belief is not widespread, Gogol chooses the cat as the only transformative element for the witch. It can be carelessly argued that his artistic choice corresponds to Jacobson's and Bogatyrev's position that the transition from folklore to literature is inevitably accompanied by a creative impetus, in which case the transformation of folklore in the new domain of literature "is not a passive reproduction", but "a creative art."[125] What this means is that there is the inevitable change in the structure of folklore in literature especially when the transition process is accompanied by the creative impetus of the literary artist.

Natalia Kononenko also gives a considerable attention to the witch in an article that sympathizes with the oppression of women in patriarchal Ukrainian witch stories. The work is largely based on information from field work and on collated data from Volodymyr Hnatiuk's four hundred texts on witchcraft, witches and sorcerers. Again, the transformative subjects of the witch as informed by Kononenko, includes frog, dog, pig, horse and cat. There is a prominence given to both the witch-horse element and the witch-cat element.

With the latter, Kononenko recounts Hnatiuk's story in which there is a tripartite transformative process. During a clandestine mission, a woman (the witch), transforms into a horse at certain stage of her mission and thereafter into a cat when she is caught.[126]

The idea of cat as the last transformative subject should arouse great curiosity. One is led to think that this happens because the cat is more domestic, a pet closer to human than any other animal. This, of course is a logical reasoning. But there are always two against one in every argument in support of the rules of logic when it comes to issues of the supernatural. Such metaphysical philosophizing I do not want to embark on.

The argument remains that the variations in cat beliefs from Sofia's account, and other ethnographic accounts, as we can see, are inconsistent with the association forced by Gogol between the cat and the witch. In doing this, Gogol has created, in Homi Bhabha's parlance, an ambivalent discourse[127] for this association. This is because the witch-cat discourse in Gogol tends to produce a distorted cultural phenomenon to the non-Ukrainian reader who in most cases would adopt the literary text as an ethnographic resource.

The Yoruba people of Western Nigeria and parts of West Africa, as discussed in chapter 1, believe that witches transform only into a cat or bird when they want to execute their nefarious nocturnal acts or when they attend esoteric meetings. Gogol's *appropriation* of this association for Ukrainian culture, and as reflected in some other cultures might immediately prompt an erroneous universalistic interpretation for the witch-cat element, as a factor attaining homogeneity across world cultures. I found out that Gogol's inspiration for this was neither essentially from foreign influence, nor from Ukrainian ethnographic notes in Markevich's poem, but for the most part, his childhood dream experience.[128] There is thus an infusion of an authorial persona into a mainstream cultural text which has an overbearing affect on ethnographic detail.

A second case of confusion of reality with fiction as pertinent to Ukrainian culture lies in the author's plot development. *A May Night and the Drowned Maiden* presents one of the most obvious examples of this uncanny situation. Other narrative techniques that cast doubts on the realness of cultural ethos, aside from the witch-cat discourse, feature in this story. These techniques, which include dramatic irony, dream symbol and transformative synthesis, have a dual affect: they serve as a catalyst for Gogol's plot development and as a demeaning factor to the beliefs accompanying folklore materials used .These elements are carefully identified in the plot summary below.

The Witch-Cat Discourse.

The love episode between Ganna and Levko introduces an air of grotesque story telling. Levko starts by asserting his masculine pride in providing any explanation possible to the Ukrainian sky, and in no time, to Levko, the stars in the sky become the angels of God .And with a huge appetite for stories to brighten the night and conceding that men, as reflected in Gogol, are a repository of the knowledge of folk stories with the corresponding oratorical acumen in narrating them, Ganna opens up with the request that will introduce the witch-cat element as a catalyst for the narration of the story : "…long ago when I was little and lived with Mother, they used to tell some dreadful story about that house. Levko, you must know it, tell it to me…."

Accordingly, in unraveling the mystery surrounding the "house", Levko gives the story of a Cossack officer with a fair maiden as a daughter. The arrival of a new step-mother into the family comes almost at the same time with the arrival of a black cat. As the story is meant to consolidate, and perhaps, feed Ganna's imagination on the existence of witches, the step-mother is designated a witch, and she performs witchcraft on her first

night. As one could expect, her victim is her step-daughter, Ganna, who has a fierce battle with a black cat overnight. Ganna succeeds in effecting physical damage on the cat's arm during the fray. The step-mother does not come out until the third day, by which time she shows up with a broken arm. Ganna then realizes that her step-mother was the cat she had wrestled with three nights before. This "witch" of a step-mother prompts the Cossack to send his daughter away from the home. In abject hopelessness, the step-daughter drowns herself.

Dream Symbol 1

If we reflect on the entry of the witch-cat element, we will notice that even in the story there is an ambiguous mix of reality, dream, imagination etc.For instance, the encounter between the step-daughter and the cat happens in the night when the latter is sleeping. We see the echoes of an action taking place in the dream. This dream image is even projected through the utterances of the characters. For example, recalling the childhood nostalgia on the grotesque stories, Ganna says: "I remember as though it were a dream."[129]

However, creating an unusual situation in which the role of dream is downplayed, what may appear to have happened in the dream, or a nightmare or empty hallucination, is manifested in the physical. The step-mother comes out with a broken arm on the third day. Significantly, the author has been able to establish a basic motif upon which the rest of the narrative is based. It can be said that the banishment of Ganna from her father's home is swiftly mediated by the witch, having realized that her witch-like identity through the impersonation of a cat is discovered.

The next plot is unrelated to the story given by Levko. It is titled "The Mayor". The reader would expect to find in the introduction of this plot a description of who the Mayor is, instead, Gogol demonstrates his intent on projecting Ukrainian images with the description of the Ukrainian night and people.[130] The fabulous description of the Ukrainian night echoes the kind of romantic conversation between the bride and bridegroom on the eve of their wedding. The embellishment is all a palace guard needs to win the heart of a queen to the altar. This authorial intent will come into the fore by the time we see the product of the witch-cat element: the Drowned Maiden, resurfacing in the fifth plot of the story.

The third plot of the story is about the Mayor, Levko's father, turning out to be "an unexpected rival" to the latter. The clandestine affair between the Mayor and his son's fiancée is soon disclosed. This is followed by a fourth plot on merry-making by the dissident young men.

Dramatic Irony

Again, a yet fascinating technique is employed here which plays the same role as the witch-cat element in terms of advancing the plot. This is dramatic irony. Both techniques alternate in being the cause and effect of the transformation that takes place. In the case of dramatic irony, such strange occurrence of spontaneous transformation of the physical appearance of a character is the cause and explanation to the dramatic irony. For instance, the event in this plot is a follow-up on the previous. Levko, "the rogue in the black sheepskin," is determined to fight his father and have Ganna back. He instigates a juvenile unrest against the Mayor, who will imprison him in the fourth plot. On three different occasions, Levko's boys set him free from his incarceration and instead replace

him with the Mayor's sister-in-law. In each situation there is the illusive transformation of Levko to two different personalities: the Mayor's sister-in-law and Kalenik, his friend.

The first illusive transformation of Levko shows the Mayor and his clerk each boasting they have the criminal in their custody. Getting to the prison, they are amazed to see the Mayor's sister-in-law.[131] In the second illusive transformation, the Mayor and his men move towards a hut, the clerk opens the hut with the hope of finding the prisoner. By now astonishment is overshadowed by nervousness when they see the Mayor's sister-in-law a second time. She is then believed to be a witch and the Mayor orders for her to be burned with the hut.

This order is withdrawn when the sister-in-law exonerates herself with the sign of the cross, thereby convincing them she is not a witch. The third illusive transformation will happen when the Mayor's men thought they have finally captured the criminal, only for the former to discover it is the drunkard, Kalenik, whom his boys have captured. In each case, the criminal has been set free by the irate youth and replaced with another person. This narrative technique, that is dramatic irony, is antithetical to the technique of the witch-cat element. The antithesis does not lie in their function, as they both violate natural truth conditions, thereby constituting a catalyst for plot advancement.

The distinction between the two lies in the fact that while the violation as a result of dramatic irony is temporal at least to the reader, that of the witch-cat element tends to insist on a permanent distortion of natural course of order. That is while the illusiveness of the former is soon known by both the reader and the characters; the transformation through the latter is presented as real, a violation of natural truth condition that cannot be reversed.

Therefore, this violation becomes a truth condition as far as the veracity of the existence of the witch, and the cat she impersonates is concerned. The witch-cat element attains its highest significance when we consider that it enables the writer to give completeness to the entire story. This is brought up by the reemergence of the Drowned Maiden in Levko's story now in the main narrative by the fifth plot. This kind of transposition transcends time and space. Levko's story, as narrated, happened some time in the past. But the product of the witch-cat element, the Drowned Maiden, reemerges in the fifth plot to enhance the story's completeness and success. The fugitive Levko brings to life the story he has narrated earlier to Ganna.The author merges the folk story with his narrative by artfully introducing the story teller in the fifth plot:

> The instigator of all this turmoil, undisturbed by anything and untroubled by the search parties that were being sent in all directions, walked slowly toward the old house and the pond. I think I need hardly say that it was Levko.His black sheepskin was unbuttoned.[132]

In bringing a narrated story to the main narrative, Gogol places his hero side by side with the setting of the story he has recounted. This is the old house in which the Maiden lived and the pond in which she drowns herself. We see a situation whereby the narrator of a story embarks on telling it to the end by simply actualizing it. That is, Levko, a story teller, becomes part of the story he began telling in the first plot. Levko moves close to the house and pond. He gazes into the pond which reflects the old house. The next set of actions is his encounter with the Drowned Maiden.

In a frantic search for an opportunity to avenge her own murder, the Drowned Maiden as a spirit strengthening the traditional belief in *Rusalki*, finally finds help with Levko, who helps her to identify her step-mother. Again, an important nuance about the

physical manifestation of the witch is depicted in this episode. This further strengthens the point articulated by the narrative with regard to the witch-cat element. The Drowned Maiden's spirit or soul, as in folk belief, wanders about in the water with other drowned maidens seeking for revenge from her step-mother. By this time, the step-mother is now in the water, making it difficult for the Maiden to recognize the witch amongst other maidens.

Suffice to say that in order to identify the witch, one needs a crossing of the threshold from the world of the dead to the world of the living. It is only the living, Levko.But that can help to identify the living (the witch).We can interpret it this way: the world of the dead or spirit can only be seen by an insider. Likewise, a witch cannot be seen by an ordinary human, except when she transforms herself into a cat. This is because she belongs to the other world, separate from the ordinary. And in order to perpetrate her mostly nocturnal activities, she hides her witch-like appearance that must not be seen by humans, and instead impersonates a cat, which can be seen. However, the emphasis on cat, and not horse, pig or frog within the text has been my subject of probe. As I have argued all along, the persistent association of the witch with the cat is a Gogolian *appropriation*, which in turn is a remarkable distortion of ethnographic detail.

Since one good turn deserves another, the Maiden also offers to help Levko.But gain the consent of his father to allow him marry Ganna. She then gives him a magic letter, supposedly written by the commissar demanding that the Mayor marry his son to Ganna.The Mayor is thus compelled to marry the two. In evaluating the transformation that happens to the witch-cat element in the transition from folk belief to literature, one

would immediately notice the encapsulation of this belief, as defined from ethnographic perspective, by dream and dream symbols.

The dream element has a dual affect on authorial and textual disposition towards folk beliefs with regard to the witch-cat element. First, it reinforces the beliefs and also casts doubt on their realness. This is because, while some of the encounter with the witch, (the cat), happen in the dream, others too occur in the physical. Gogol is apt to marry these opposites together in the plot. While he presents the whole action to have happened when Levko sleeps, or faints or is presumed to be dead by the Mayor and other young men ordered to deal with him, Gogol brings the metaphysical into the physical. The letter supposedly received by Levko from the Drowned Maiden in his dream, is seen in the physical and handed to its intended recipient. It is a truism that Gogol's dream predates Freudian dream interpretation.

It is also true, given the pattern of narrative and the contextual usage of folk belief, that Gogol adopts dream as a scientific technique, for example, to delineate the seriousness of the belief in the existence of the witch *vis a vis* the cat. We find a contrasting treatment of dream in *The Lost Letter*. Here, dream further lends credence to the existence of the supernatural. After a victorious battle with witches with the aid of the sign of the cross, Foma's granddad finally regains his horse, cap and letter. As he rides home dangerously on a galloping horse, his wife who has been asleep is simultaneously jumping on the bench when granddad rides in.

When the wife recounts how she saw in her dream, a moving stove round the hut (house), and granddad confirms: "you have had it asleep, I have had it awake. I see I must have our hut blessed."[133] The simultaneous combination of a singular action both in the

physical and metaphysical realm explains that the supernatural exists. But in leaving a gap in this belief, one that suggests that the experience of granddad and that of his wife may be a mere coincidence, what the former rides on is a galloping horse while the latter sees a moving stove in dream.

There is thus no serious commitment to the theme of the supernatural. This is where the explanation of Western influence may find a reference, especially the influence of Romanticism, etc. It also supports the argument that Gogol was only interested in creating stories using the Ukrainian motif as resources, and that he was never interested in folklore or its accurate representation in his writings. The folklore belief in *Rusalka*, exemplified by the drowned maiden is thus downplayed by this creativity. It is at first meant to feature in a narrated story by Levko. But later, it is acted out by the story-teller himself, all wrapped in the atmosphere of dream.

Ethnographic Concessions

In fairness to the writer, one could concede that he presents many of Ukrainian cultural practices, for example, wedding practices and material arts of the Ukrainian people. In almost all the pages of the two volumes, the stove is mentioned and a typical house of the Ukrainian peasant is depicted. Gogol gives much attention to the cultural identity of his characters with their varying styles of dress. Gogol's Literary landscaping, especially with the high poetic description of the Ukrainian night and people in *A May Night or the Drowned Maiden* demonstrates his intent to project the Ukrainian message.

In a footnote at the beginning of *Viy*, Gogol declares: "This whole story is folklore. I was unwilling to change it, and I tell it almost in the simple words in which I heard it". The editor of the edition of Gogol's tales which I used, Leonard Kent, among many

students of Gogol's works declares this assertion as false. He says "No discovery has been made of the folklore source of *Viy*."[134] In any case, Gogol presents himself as a folklorist authenticating the source of his motif. In the episode involving the "Philosopher" Khoma and the de- ceased Cossack's daughter, Ukrainian funeral practice is given laconic attention. Images of icons, lit candles, and the reading of prayers on the corpse for three nights before final burial are essentially Ukrainian Orthodox practice. In all of the *Dikanka Tales* there are historical elements which piquantly define the cultural identity of the Ukrainians. Cossack freedom and valor, for instance, is the Ukrainian being. In A*Terrible Vengeance*, there seems to be a dedication of the story to the Cossacks in the Dnieper area, which appears to be a geographically strategic point to the Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Tartars and the Russians.

It is not clear why Gogol chooses this time to pattern his character development within the Cossacks milieu. What appears to be feasible is that attention to them is a way of acknowledging their historical significance within the Empire. *A Terrible Vengeance* is full of belligerent encounters, horror, tragedy, betrayal, vengeance and it is emotionally intrigueing.It could be described as the most moralistic of all the tales. The magnitude of the bloody war between the Cossacks and the Poles is too great that it can only be euphemistically described by the narrator thus: "And the festival was kept on the mountains and great was the merrymaking..."[135] As depicted in the story, the Cossacks are men of war. Their fascination with life is intricately linked to, and fundamentally predetermined by their ability and opportunity to fight war and engage in heroic deeds.

It might be worth considering that Gogol seems to see no strength in the capability of the wedding occasion of the Captain of the Cossack's son with its accompanying

merry making and folk songs, to fabricate a morally emotional and tragic story like *A Terrible Vengeance.* Therefore, it is no wonder why he introduces one of the most supernatural themes – the concepts of generational curse and destiny. The sorcerer among the Cossacks with his strange manifestations at the wedding is used to develop the plot of the story. (The issue of a likely invading sorcerer at wedding is peculiarly Ukrainian belief.)

As in other stories, there is a metaphysical confrontation that involves the Christian world and the dark pagan world. Lord Danilo Burulbash, [136] is a Christian Cossack who unfortunately has a sorcerer for a father in-law. The sorcerer is seen to be responsible for several deaths within the Cossack community. Most of his nefarious activities are nocturnal. The sinful sorcerer visits his daughter, Katerina, where he engages in a physical and deadly fight with the latter's husband, and Danilo.Danilo almost lost his life in this battle.

A situation which springs up anger and dread in Katerina of the danger of her father's existence. Paradoxically, this fury is not fully manifested as she will later free the sorcerer from his captivity, the consequence of which is the untimely death of all the characters. The murderous sorcerer kills a hermit having failed to pray for his sin. Through a short story at the end of the tale, Gogol gives a supernatural explanation to this tragic flow. The sorcerer is vindicated of his guilt and crime as he unconsciously acted based on ancestral spell. Unlike *Viy* in which aspects of Ukrainian demonology are treated in a most farcical atmosphere, *A Terrible Vengeance* presents Gogol's most serious commitment to the theme of the supernatural.

However, in a holistic sense, Ukrainian beliefs in the supernatural are extant in the many folklore materials in Gogol's *Vechera*.But amidst the agglomeration of several literary techniques I have mentioned, these beliefs are clouded in silent contexts, in a way demonstrating the writer's lack of serious belief in them.

## CHAPTER 3.CULTURE IN LITERATURE: PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND EMPIRICIST PERSPECTIVES

Right from the Socratic times through Plato and Aristotle, a dialectical approach to epistemology has been the hallmark. The dialectics is foregrounded in the conscious disputatious movement opposed to the ideals of pre-Socratic thinkers. One of the epistemic paradigms of this new thinking was found in the questioning of the closeness of art or literature to reality. In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates opines that poetry derives from inspiration rather than wisdom. He also attacks poets for pretending to possess knowledge they indeed, do not possess.[137] One of the most profound doctrines on the delusion of art to reality is explained through the famous "myth of the cave" recorded in the seventh book of the *Republic*.

The cave can be a metaphor for the poet and his poetry while a reader is the man deluded in the darkness of the cave, mistaking shadows for reality. In *Ion*, the dialogues between Socrates and Ion present an astute remark which borders on the closure of the text to authorial intent. For instance, Socrates argues that one must understand the thought of the poet before learning the lines of a given poet.[138] In distinguishing between the "provinces" of poetry and philosophy, Plato posits that the former is divorced from reason, which is the realm of the latter. Indeed, he argued, poetry, like criticism, is by nature deeped in "emotional transport" and it is irrational, since it is a consequence of "inspiration."[139]

These classical assertions and prescriptions can be deemed as the historical antecedents of postmodern approaches to literary studies. They possess transcendental values which serve as the fundamental underpinnings of theories, like the reader-response, rooted in empiricism. In this chapter, I undertake to appropriate Plato's

provinces of poetry and philosophy for the domain of literature and culture respectively. The domain of literature is encapsulated in irrationality. The writer, like Socrates' poet, is "a light and winged thing, and holy, and never able to compose until he has become inspired, and is beside himself and reason is no longer in him."[140] On the other hand, culture is the domain of rationality, a cumulative of lived experience garnered by the sword of reason. The gap between the two domains, have over the years, been blurred, significantly by the invention of the post-modern discipline of cultural studies by Richard Hoggat when he founded the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1964. Since then, academic departments of English and literatures, for instance, have been replaced or waned in importance to the emergence of the new discipline.

Since cultural studies is an interdisciplinary field with the fundamental goal of teaching and learning a broad range of the superstructure of any society, its scientific paraphernalia cut across the component of the superstructure. One of the most prominent of these tools is literature. Literary texts with cultural content become a "viable" tool of investigation into, for instance, a foreign culture. Hence, Anglo-American readers of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, though respectively set in Igbo and Yoruba pre-colonial traditional villages, are the binoculars through which a clear glimpse of Africa feeds the vision, imagination and curiosity of non-African readers. Readers who have not stepped on Russian or Ukrainian soil or have not come in contact with the people of the East-Slavic regions will at least claim a knowledge of it via the reading of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or Gogol's *Evenings On A Farm Near Dikanka*, *Dead Souls* etc.

Literary texts with cultural contents, though my primary object of investigation, are not the only elements that constitute this system of knowledge. The Western media, basking in a monopoly of the self in an increasingly globalized world prefigures, for instance, what the image of Africa in the eyes of foreigners should be. For example, a news story on CNN concerning the decision makers in an African country, will, in most cases, make a visual presentation of the remotest and clumsiest village in such country as though the only marketable display is the ugly side of Africa. The non-African viewer, who has not been to the continent before, is thus misinformed as he obtains a myopic view as a result of consistent presentation of this ugliness. Similarly, a "terrorist" attack in America is tagged an "insurgent" attack in Russia, the Beslan school attack is a clear example.

The system of knowledge, which includes the electronic and print media, cinematic(film) and literary texts, is thus a corrupted channel which superimposes the synchronic upon the diachronic in the process of cultural knowing. My attention in this thesis has been on the literary text, a component of this system of knowledge. In distinctly identifying the spot upon which I propose a panacea to this inadequacy, I tag the conception and the writing of culture in literature as the production stage, the author being the producer. The reading process is the distribution stage, while the reception of culture in literature by the reader is the consumption stage. I have argued through Amos Tutuola in chapter 1 that the writer/producer of culture in literature can be extremely determined to act with astute precision. In this case, he is a folklorist or a cultural anthropologist. On the other hand, the Ukrainian Nikolai Gogol presents the contrary.

The case of Gogol and a deliberate inaccurate representation of culture in literature is the norm in most literary texts with culture motifs.

On the reading/distribution stage I will propose through careful evaluation of phenomenological and empiricist approaches to literature, a better approach to the reading process. The third stage, the reception/consumption stage, as the survey analysis below shows, confirms that the reader/consumer adopts the literary text as an ethnographic resource. For example, a non-Ukrainian reader of Gogol's Dikanka Tales understands the Ukrainian people and culture through the reading. Likewise the non-Nigerian reader of Amos Tutuola's novels understands "African" cosmology and peoples through the same reading.

## Analysis of Survey

The survey was designed for an inquiry into readers' perspective to fiction or films of foreign origin to their own culture. The ultimate goal is to investigate the extent of cultural epistemology within the literature-culture continuum. That is to examine the extent to which readers take literature as an ethnographic resource. 50 respondents from different classes, races and social categories expressed individualistic perception on the subject matter. I used the word perception because the questions do not directly reflect this ultimate goal in order to prevent preprogrammed or preemptive responses. The first 4 questions deal with written texts (novels) while the last 2 deal with cinematic texts (films).In this analysis, I focus mainly on the third and fourth questions which read respectively: "Does the novel/story give you a little hint on the culture of the writer, on the culture, or on the people on which it is based?" "What can you say you have learnt about the culture or the people based on the story/novel?. Please state the title of novel

and the culture it is based on or, the culture or nationality of the writer". The fourth question is a follow up on the third. Moreover, question 6 is similar to questions 3 and 4 except for its focus on films, the cinematic text.

My intent is not tied to specific knowledge of culture and people in literature from each respondent. Rather, these responses already demonstrate that there is an epistemological knowing through literature. Just as I confirm through Gogol in chapter 2, and as can be usually expected, the inaccuracy of cultural representation in literature, I evaluate the efficacy of this knowing from the reader's perspective. The knowing of a part through a whole or a whole through a part is not essentially dissimilar to the blurring of distinction between the synchronic and the diachronic. For example, a reader may adopt fragments of cultural elements in a given text as representative of a people and culture which may in themselves be overwhelmingly complex and contain varying diversity. Gogol's Ukrainian folklore in the Dikanka Tales, as questionable as its accuracy is, may be reflective only of Gogol's Sorochintsy. Conversely, there are ethnographic reports on cultural practices and beliefs markedly defining variations across regions in the Ukraine.

Similarly, literature is an element of culture thus culture in literature only reflects a part of a sub-culture- literature. Moreover, the literary artist situates culture within the historical context but culture is dynamic and exists in a fluid. The discourse of ritual suicide in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* respectively treat a panoramic theme of a "once upon a time in a little village". The cultural practice of a little pre-colonial Oyo village or Aba village is inconsequential to a more general Yoruba culture or Igbo culture, or at the most, Nigerian

culture. To give a lucid sense to this is to juxtapose the reader's affinity to the historicity of the text. Quite precisely, does the reader of a cultural text situate culture within the historical and spatial framework designed by the writer?

A different dimension to this query is to examine the writer's deliberate deviation from reality while culture is inscribed into his text. Here I will cite two examples from the cinematic literature. The first one is the Hollywood classic, *King Kong*, based on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*; one of the most controversial adventure novels of the twentieth century.[141] Canonical critical attention to this book has viewed it as a critique of European imperialism. This, of course, is the aggregate opinion of what has been styled interpretive community of literature.

The powers of discourse emanating from this community overshadows a crucial question, one that calls into question the humanity of black Africans and is no less revealing to my primary concern : the reading community. The depiction of the natives on the Congo Island in a way that portrays them as subhuman, new breed of animals, apes, monkeys and gorillas and in more scholarly terms, barbaric, is my paramount concern as it seems to bear a sustained perception of the African and their cultures in a Eurocentric world.

A case in point is Jack's preconceived notion of the Congo Island that is, according to him, not habitable. Discovering otherwise, he makes an eloquent remark that is commensurate with the visual display that though inhabited; the Island is an abode of cannibals, less of human nature- "New species of animals." This calls into question, the morality in European national character with its campaign for human reason and rationalism. It is no wonder why Homi Bhabha, while elucidating the ambivalence of

colonial discourse, posits that "the dream of post enlightenment civility alienates its own language of liberty, [reason and human equality]" (my emphasis).[142]

The notion of a barbaric culture is synonymous to a barbaric people. This misconception has enjoyed a historical continuity. Conrad published *Heart of Darkness* in 1902.In 1930, it inspired a film entitled *King Kong* .By the turn of 1976, *King Kong* had received a consistent acceptability such that it gracefully inspired another version of itself. As though to preserve and further maintain that the 21st century African is an offspring of the then savaged, sub-human natives , whose ways of life are shared with "*King Kong*" and other beasts, a third and perhaps, more exaggerated version of *King Kong* was released on December 14, 2006.

One reason that makes it evident that the film is an adaptation of Conrad's novel is not just because of the entire narrative and the visual display of the contact between the Congo people with animals and the activities of European imperial explorers and exploiters, but it is the fact that one of the characters holds on to Conrad's novel .

One can conclude that the cinematic representation of Conrad's novel gives a visual display of the barbarism of black Africa. I did not investigate the reception of this racial misjudgment in the course of my research. But I can recount my experience with a co-passenger in a public transit in Edmonton. It was a nice weather though in the city. I was heading for the University and so I took the train. I never had the habit of talking especially on a short journey. At the same time, I made conscious effort to politely reciprocate the friendly gestures and perhaps, respond to my co-passenger, a nice white gentleman, whose persistence on discovering my talking point was too great. "Nice weather today!" he said. "Really nice," I retorted. "Where are you from?" Though I

expected he would ask me for my name first, I nonetheless answered him. "Nigeria in "Africa? hmn, we are all human!", I was amazed at his comment. I pondered a little while to guess what may have prompted him to such reflex utterance.

I began to conceptualize and even contextualize this statement. If, according to him, we are all human, that suggests that somebody said we were not all human, or he himself had thought we were not all human, or he is in the process of making up his mind on the humanity in black Africans, I thought deeply. Whatever the psychological and sociological condition that prompts this statement, it is obvious that there is a gap that needs to be filled with regard to the perceived metamorphosis of the black race to the level of humanity. *King Kong* may have constituted an integral part of the system of knowledge that helped nourished my co-passenger's ignorance and dug this racial gap.

A second example is the famous Hollywood *Tarzan*. Here, my concern is not the similar treatment of a mix between black Africans and animals. I focus on viewers' reception. Among a number of workers at the University of Alberta Hospital, I inquired about their knowledge of films on Africa. Another Hollywood classic, *Tarzan*, was brought to attention. Of the five workers, four of them believe that *Tarzan* truly depicts how Africa is. One of them even said "I know that Tarzan was born in the Congo." These concerns on the reading or reception process and its accompanying cultural and ethical misplacement have prompted the design of an analytic framework for my survey and readership in general. This includes the metonymic and non-metonymic reader.

The Metonymic and Non-Metonymic Reader

The metonymic reader misconstrues the part for a whole and vice versa, while the non-metonymic reader, contextualizes cultural or folkloric elements of the text. With the latter possessing the acumen in acknowledging both the *textuality* and *intertextual* nature of the text on one hand, and the closure on the other hand, the text becomes an array of signifieds, attaining freedom from being a channel of authorial injunction to the reader. I am not canvassing for a total "death of the author" or the text. My concern is that the literary text is not and has never been a reliable or viable ethnographic resource. Although in Chapter 1, I confirm through Tutuola an author's commitment and faithfulness in the accuracy of folklore in literature, Gogol's intent, on the contrary, and as can be usually expected in any literature containing folk elements, is to produce a "disillusioned reader." From a holistic perspective, both writers situate culture within a particular spatial and historical framework, a consideration which may be missing in the reader's consciousness.

The non-metonymic reader is the ideal, desirable reader of cultural texts .Respondents of the survey below are from a mix of categories, including occupational, ethnic, national, religious and social. A third classification of the respondents apart from the metonymic and non-metonymic is the others. This category includes respondents who do not give a definitive response to questions 3, 4 and 6, or do not respond to them at all

| Metonymic | Non-Metonymic Reader | Others |
|---|---|---|
| 46 | 7 | 7 |

From the above, it becomes clear that the reading community of literature adopts the literary text as a reliable ethnographic resource. A further analysis of the respondents who

are non-metonymic readers shows that they possess the critical attitude one that is attuned to the ethos of the interpretive community. This idea is more strengthened considering the occupational category of the 7 non-metonymic readers. All of them are students of the University of Alberta. 6 of the 7 are basically students of literature at the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies. The last one is a student of linguistics. It can thus generally be inferred that they all belong to the interpretive community of literature.

It can also be concluded that the reading community, as I have indicated, are metonymic readers, who have over the years painfully taken literature as a viable ethnographic resource.

Deep and Surface Structure in the Appreciation of Cultural Texts

The adoption of an interdisciplinary approach to scholarly studies is essentially a post-modern phenomenon. In view of this, my adoption and application in chapters 1 and 2, of the deep and surface structures, an integral part of transformational-generative grammar theory of linguistics, is not a literary aberration .This is important in understanding the synthetic nature of a literary text with cultural codes. Most scholars of the reader-response theories have always looked at the text in general in relation to the reader. Little attention has been given to the nature of a cultural text vis-à-vis the reader. I therefore propose to explore the adoption of this appropriation for the appreciation of cultural texts in general. Generative grammar, as a linguistic notion, has been *appropriated* by music theorists.[143] The application of this linguistic phenomenon in the literary analysis of cultural texts would go a long way in bridging the semantic gap dug by the nuances of culture in literature.

The term transformational grammar evolved from generative grammar .It was developed in the mid 20th century by the American linguist, Avram Noam Chomsky. It is a set of rules clearly identifying and acknowledging that in the nature of language grammar and structures exists the fundamental notion of what is finite and what is infinite. In this way, transformational grammar is distinguished from the canonical traditional or regular grammar, since it postulates that an infinite set of strings can be generated within a finite set of language rules. Hence the notion of deep and surface structures. Language units like the phrase, clause or sentence have two stages of representations: the deep and the surface structures. The former is the core meaningful but hidden relations or connections that surround each language unit. The surface structure makes a ready revelation of meaning to the language user .But the deep structure portends that there exists semantic and multiple difference beneath the meaning the surface structure reveals. The summary of all these is the importance of the complexity of language grammar as against canonical assumptions that it is a set of rules that must be learned for a competent use of language.

In the same vein, culture in literature possesses two levels of representation: the deep and surface structure. Here, my concern is not the grammaticalness of a literary language. But that beneath every diction with cultural connotation within a cultural text lies a generic cultural code that needs to be unraveled for an accurate understanding of cultural or folkloric representation in the text. I have demonstrated this, for example, in chapter 1 through Amos Tutuola's *The Palm Wine Drinkard*.Critical attention to the book assumes that the hero Drinkard is a fictional character. But through my careful anthropological quest, I have discovered that the hero's archetype is an important figure

in Yoruba ontological narrative in the person of the god Obatala who was extremely given to palm wine drinking at the time of creation. This pattern runs through in almost all of Tutuola's writings. The concepts of "Abiku", "mogbon juba", "Songo", "Oya", "iwin", "juju"; as explained in chapter 1, have deep-rooted semantic and generic implication that are not readily available on the surface level in the texts.

Similarly, though to many of the reviewers and critics of Gogol, the Dikanka Tales is an embodiment of Ukrainian cosmology. But the fundamental motifs of Rusalka, fern's flower, St.John's Eve, witchcraft beliefs etc; may elude the consciousness of any critic, Ukrainian or non-Ukrainian, without the slightest familiarity with Ukrainian ethnography. Reading the tales is only a first step which involves grasping the surface structure that there exists the belief in the metaphysical. Knowing the deep or folklore roots of these beliefs may not be directly obtainable from Gogol's writing. Moreover, an attempt to begin to formulate cultural knowledge through mere reading of the tales will nonetheless produce an informed, but certainly, in Gogol's parlance, a "disillusioned" reader. The reason for this, as I mentioned in chapter 2, is because of Gogol's deliberate distortion of Ukrainian demonology when he uses the cat as the sole transformative subject of the witch.

Through this witch-cat element, a witch-cat discourse, foreign to Ukrainian ethnography, is created. Through further inquiries, I discovered that the source of this motif is neither the Ukrainian ethnography nor influence from Western Literature. But the primary source of Gogol's witch-cat element is his own dream experience during childhood. This context presents a unique case in which authorial idiosyncrasy has a manifest affect on ethnographic accuracy. Accordingly, the deep structure of a cultural

text may not be restricted to the confines of ethnography, but can embrace the author's worldview.

Finally, in reaching a compromise between the domain of literature and culture in the text, a considerably appropriate approach is to first acknowledge that there are two stages of representation, that is the deep and surface structures before exploring a balance between phenomenological and empiricist reading.

## Phenomenological and Empiricist Reading

The fundamental resource for the reader-response theory, like all literary theories, is philosophy. A philosophical analysis is in no small measures necessary for an evaluation of the domains of literature and culture, Plato's provinces of poetry and philosophy respectively. Interestingly, philosophy, which in Plato's opinion is the province of reason and rationality as against the irrational province of poetry, is the repository of all theoretical knowledge in literary studies. From Nietzsche to Kant, Hegel, De Mann, Coleridge, Deleuze, Derrida and to other twentieth century thinkers, a conventional movement has been to see philosophy as a kind of idealism in constant quest for freedom from absolutes.[144] From this standpoint, reader-response theorists like Stanley Fish, Michael Riffaterre, Harold Bloom, Wolfgang Iser, H.R.Jauss, Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, Hills Miller, Frederic Jameson, etc, campaign for openness as against closure with its associated absolutes, for a desirable aspect of reading. These new theorists assume themselves as model readers.

From a broad theoretical consideration emerge concepts like literary and non-literary reading, real reading, etc.The overriding pathos remains openness in which the reading process is emancipated from text-centered priorities. From a different but

favorable interpretation, the ordinary sense of openness is multiple concurrent meaning as a major moment in the reading process. And it is "balanced against closure [which is the] selection of a single preferred meaning."[145]

Moreover, the idea of openness seems to be partly vertically fashioned along the scientific assumption that "perception, cognition and comprehension are not predominantly data-driven."[146] Although given the risk involved in adopting a range of proliferated methods of reading and meaning formation, there have been some control measures to impose closure in order to enhance "the 'validation' of the most probable meaning."[147]

More importantly, if perception, cognition and comprehension are not predominantly data-driven, then the process of the formation of meaning in the reading process is enhanced by external, non-textual factors, i.e., psychological, sociological, cultural etc. To illustrate this is to imagine a hypothetical example of a white Edmontonian who has not been anywhere beyond the Canadian borders. He reads Gogol's Tales or Tutuola's novels and obtains cultural knowledge presented to him by each writer.

But in distinguishing between the culture of Dikanka village of early 19th century and a 21st century Ukraine or between the Yoruba culture of Abeokuta town of pre-colonial Nigeria and today's "Nigerian culture", he requires certain psychological or sociological factors that will enhance a meticulous cognition and comprehension process. The sociological factor derives from his hypothetical interaction or friendship with immigrant population from the Ukraine and Nigeria prior to the reading of the texts. This

sociological factor as a result of cross border migration is however, just an integral part of a string of domestic familiarities.

The reading may also be accurately or misleadingly influenced by a similar domestic situation. Here I present Robert de Beaugrade's account to demonstrate how domestic situation misleadingly influences reading:

> While working in Asia with Singaporeans I was confronted with unexpected responses to well-known texts, which brought the importance of cultural context into sharper perspective. In T.S Eliot's famous poem "Morning at the Window", which to me conjures up images of foggy London, the line about a "passer-by with muddy skirts" led several respondents to visualize the situational setting as a rural Asian village, where streets are not paved; one student said the passerby was just coming from "work in the Padi fields.[148]

My survey analysis above confirms that most of the reading community adopts the cultural text as an ethnographic resource. One of my respondents who claims to have had a degree in Film Studies even projected the cinematic text as such: "I have found film to be incredibly helpful in introducing me to other cultures; I find they usually humanize foreign cultures for me."

Judging from Gogol's witch-cat element and the consideration of the synchronic and diachronic, it can, as can usually be expected, be ascertained that literature is not a viable ethnographic resource. It is however obvious that it is impossible to doctor or control authorial channels in the production of literary texts with cultural content. What is perhaps possible is to fine-tune a better approach to the reading or consumption of these texts. Many theorists, as explained above have directed their scholarly interest towards this. But on a broad scale, attention has not been specifically directed towards the reading

community, in the sense of an enclave consisting of readers who are non-literary students or who have not received adequate education to enrich their intellectual capacity.

But an attempt to suggest a way forward for adequate reading of cultural texts will be tantamount to imposing another form of closure. Nevertheless I shall conclude by exploring the melting pot between phenomenological and empiricist readings. The reader's psychological influence derives from his intellectual capacity, largely enriched by training in the literary industry. However, if our hypothetical reader does not have these two factors in place before reading, then comprehension is enhanced largely by his own personal cognition and the textuality of the text. The reader in these two opposing contexts illustrates the difference between the reading and interpretive communities of literature. While the former relies on personal cognition and the torrent of textuality, the latter is nurtured by intellectual acumen one that is of literary training. I focus on the reader in the second context in which his perception and comprehension are dependent on the textuality of the text.

The textuality of a text lends the text the capacity to evolve meaning on its own, a doctrine which partly has its root from Bakhtinian dialogism. The textual meaning resides within the confines of the text. But as my reading of Gogol's Ukrainian folklore stories has shown in chapter 2, this does not always formulate a modus operandi for accurate cultural meaning. Gogol, at some point distorted Ukrainian cultural belief in witches by playing with it, just like any writer who is mostly interested in creating interesting stories using folklore as raw materials. In a holistic dimension, Tutuola's or Gogol's "archaic" culture in literature will in most cases not be situated within the synchronic and diachronic frameworks of the text by the reading community.

In considering phenomenology in the reading process, it is perhaps crucial to present the ethos of sense datum philosophers. This group sees givenness as a fact which presupposes no learning; no associations. Their ideology is founded on the fundamentals of phenomenology in epistemic terms. This is true not just because the word phenomenology, whose history dates back to early 20th century; is a science or study of phenomena[149], a basic underpinning behind Kantian *noumenon* or thing in itself. But because the word has helped form a binary with empiricism in epistemology. Phenomenology deals with the system of adopting epistemic facts through experience. That is gaining knowledge by sensing sense content. In more ordinary terms; phenomenology describes the process of acquiring knowledge by experience or acquaintance with things as they appear. Having reviewed Husserl, Heidegger, Hegel, Sartre, etc, David Cerbone concludes that phenomenology "invites us to stay with [...] 'the experience itself', to concentrate on its character and structure rather than whatever it is that might underlie it or be causally responsible for it."[150]

Let me draw a hypothetical example to illustrate and demonstrate this definition in line with the reader of a cultural text. I take the reader of Gogol's depiction of the quest for treasure by Petro and Bassavriuk's participation in its accomplishment in *St. John's Eve* who sticks to the experience of reading it .He will no doubts be oblivious of the fact that this episode conveys an important folk legend, the fern's flower in Ukrainian cosmology. Similarly, if he sticks to the experience of reading *A May Night or the Drowned Maiden*, he will be oblivious of the core Ukrainian folklore belief in the Rusalka (mermaid). In a contrary dimension, if the reader sticks to the experience of reading, he would miss the fact that there is no cogent association between the witch and

the cat in Ukrainian belief system as opposed to the forceful association of these two elements imposed by Gogol in the Dikanka Tales.

From a holistic perspective, Gogol has got a reputation of being "controversial, puzzling, and elusive."[151] These features carried on to *The Nose*, have their origins in the Dikanka Tales. The tales are replete with eclecticism, omission of details that the reader may deem important and inclusion of details that the reader may not deem important. One example of this is the romantic description of the Ukrainian night in place of the Mayor's characterization in *A May Night or the Drowned Maiden*. The idea of sticking to and acquiring experience and outright disregard for its causal and underlying elements by the phenomenological reader will result in misinformation on the culture the reader obtains in the text.

As a point of emphasis, the term acquisition connotes unlearning .For instance, in the teaching-learning process of language, the term acquisition is sometimes used to refer to obtaining language in a natural way. That is being in the language environment to achieve a first-hand experience with it. This is opposed to learning a language which involves a conscious attempt to know its grammatical component, phonetic, phonological and intonational systems in a foreign location. I posit that this is analogous to the reader responding to culture in literature.

As the analysis of my survey shows on page 79, most readers of literary texts with folklore content adopt the text as an ethnographic resource. But like the language learner in a foreign location, literature is a foreign location in which the reader, in this case, "acquires" culture. I am using the term "acquire" based on its phenomenological dimension. The category of readers I have described before and as reflected in my survey

analysis, who have no adequate intellectual capacity to distinguish between the synchronic and diachronic with regard to culture in literature can be said to acquire the experience of culture in the text. They internalize cultural knowledge of the text and draw inference from it. This may be one of the factors, if considered on a more sociological scale, responsible for stereotypical formulations, nationalism, racism and other forms of isms that can be connected with cultural learning.

On the contrary, and more importantly, empiricist epistemology canvasses a non-inferential knowing or knowledge acquisition. That is, there exists within this school a conscious attempt to repudiate all forms of givenness or in more Hegelian terms, immediacy. Hegel's "Empiricism and Philosophy of Mind" presents a greater perspective into the core of empirical epistemology. It is argued that one of the most quoted sentences in this work is in section 38: "...empirical knowledge, like its sophisticated extension, science, is rational, not because it has a foundation but because it is a self-correcting enterprise which can put any claim in jeopardy."[152] The ideas of a self-correcting enterprise, science, rationality are conjured up against givenness or Hegelian immediacy.

The attack on this irrational concept of givenness has been the preoccupation of many philosophers through the ages. It can be illustrated in the sense of the argument "that there is a difference between inferring that something is the case and, for example, seeing it to be the case."[153] In the same vein, the category of a reader of cultural text seems to infer culture from literature. This is the bane of immediacy or givenness.

There is therefore a need to incorporate the reading of cultural texts with more scientific, rational or learning model. The reader must see that nothing is "given" in terms of culture in literature, "without flying in the face of reason."[154] The given in literature

remains a myth until backed by empirically epistemic fact. In doing this, he must develop a liberally curious mindset, evaporate from the domain of culture in literature, and condense in the external domain of culture. He must be wary of formulations which may become stereotypical especially when the culture presented to him in literature and the space and time framework in which it is situated in the text, does not demonstrate culture as it is today. Moreover, the reader should be aware that many writers raise moral and ethical problems and they "offer no clear-cut solutions to them."[155] In the same vein, they raise wittingly, and sometimes unwittingly, questions of cultural importance which at the end produce a "disillusioned" reader. It is thus pertinent to call for more scholarly attention to the reading community of literature as defined in this thesis and as stipulated by the proponent of the term reading community.

In proposing a theory for reading cultural texts designed specifically for the non-literary students: the reading community, I would first echo some of my concerns which have been noted by a reviewer of literary criticism and philosophy.M.A.R Habib devoted his *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present* to bridging of the gap between interpreting and reading community. This he accomplishes by first dispelling the misconception prevalent among or created by the modern philosophers like Derrida, Lacan and Foucault who treat earlier thinkers like Plato, Kant, and Hegel as minor philosophers by acutely bringing to the surface the latter's mistakes. Habib argues that modern theory is less original than imagined.[156] This truth is clouded in the deliberate complexity of the manner in which the modern philosophers or literary scholars present their thoughts.Habib then proposes as the last principle governing his book, "an aspiration towards clarity."[157] This is inevitably called forth since, according to him:

> Much of the theory that has enabled new modes of analysis and generated extraordinarily rich insights has isolated itself from public and political discourse by its difficult language and by its reliance on jargon. There is a difference between genuine complexity which one finds in the great thinkers and in the major literary theorists- and confusion; between a command of language that can express truly difficult concepts and needlessly difficult language that offers a mere show or pretense of complexity, recycling worn ideas, and sacrificing in this process not only clarity but also subtlety and accuracy of expression. Having said this, I am aware of some of the compelling reasons behind the refusal of some theorists to be dragged into an ideology of clarity.[158]

The above submission is a literary infection, perhaps, a postmodern literary epidemic. Unfortunately, the immune system of the literary classroom has been overwhelmed by it. An example of this is my experience in a literary theory classroom, where a greater part of class discussion was inevitably devoted to unraveling or uncovering meaning and understanding the fundamental underpinnings of each theory in the anthology. This, of course, had a remarkable estrangement from public and political discourse. This thesis has as one of its ultimate goals, the uplifting of literature and literary studies to a prophylactic element in the service of the society, a principle also embraced by Stanley Fish.[159]

Accordingly, since the literary students, who constitute the interpretive community and who should possess a greater immunity, have been affected by this menace, a theory designed for the reading community of literary texts with cultural content should be presented with Habib's notion of clarity .A focus on this group of readers as described in this chapter opens a broad range of research opportunities to literary scholars. Based on the analysis of my survey and other evidences, I have described the reading by this group as phenomenological reading. That is their experience with the semiotics of culture in literature forms the basis of their adoption of the semantics of culture. I deride this

approach in favor of the empiricist model. In this way; the reader detaches himself from the experience in the formulation of semantics of culture. He understands that culture in literature is a separate entity from culture itself and so he summons a conscious effort to learn this external entity before he is convinced of his understanding of it. Just like the Hollywood film on Russia or Africa may represent the American point of view out of tens of thousands of views; and the news report on these two by Western media may represent a point of view out of tens of thousands of other views that cannot be captured even with a crane shot, culture in literature represents the authorial point of view out of tens of thousands of other views of culture. It is thus suggestible that the appreciation of the cultural text both within and without the literary classroom should go *pari pasu* with an external domain which involves a thorough ethnographic investigation.

## Conclusions

This work contains several fundamental findings, some of which open up new areas of research for future writers in the literary circle and also point out new ways of looking at the causative and enhancing factors to societal problems like racism, nationalism and cultural steryotypes.One of the main motivation, as demonstrated, is that literature can function more in political discourse and be positioned in the service of society. In view of this, I have considered the systems of knowledge which include the print and electronic media, literary and cinematic texts, among others, as porous channels which engender stereotypes, especially in terms of culture.

However, my area of investigation in this system of knowledge is the literary text containing cultural or folkloric elements. As it can usually be expected, I have affirmed that literature in most cases, does not give a true reflection of culture. Although, this looks like a truism, 21st Century post-modern phenomenon of *interdisciplinarity* has given rise to the implicit confluence of these two entities (culture and literature), such that the former can be begotten by the latter. For instance, academic departments of literature and cultural studies, modern languages and cultural studies, film and literature, etc., more often than not, use the literary or cinematic text to explore culture.

But my investigation confirms that literature is not a viable source for culture. For example, Nikolai Gogol's Ukrainian tales enforce an association between the witch and the cat, as though the latter were the only transformative subject of the former. But this is a distortion on Ukrainian belief in witches since they believe that witches mainly transform into frogs, among other animals. While reading the tales for the first time, my first encounter with what I have described in this work as the witch-cat discourse in

Gogol's Ukrainian tales led me into erroneous formulations which can be termed stereotypical. I began to conceptualize and universalize this element that, like it is in my Yoruba culture, Ukrainians believe that the cat is the transformative subject of the witch. (The Yoruba believe that witches transform into birds as a means of transport but the cat, when they want to carry out an operation). This led me into distributing a survey and confirm how other readers perceive and respond to culture in literature.

The result of the survey was analyzed based on two categories of readers. These are the reading and interpreting communities. The interpreting community which includes students of literature, literary academics and critics possess the intellectual capability to effectively read a cultural text and are not susceptible to the danger of making stereotypical formulations based on the cultural contents of the text. Also, they can distinguish between the synchronic and diachronic in the reading process. For instance, though it is evident that Amos Tutuola's novels strive to ensure the accuracy of culture they depict, the writer's works are situated within a particular historical and spatial framework which, according to the result of the survey, the interpretive community understands and are able to situate the culture they read in literature within this framework. On the contrary, the reading communities of literature are the consumers who have no intellectual capacity to read culture in literature like the interpretive community. For instance this group can adopt the culture of a pre-colonial Yoruba village of Abeokuta as a "Nigerian culture" of today, since Amos Tutuola is a Nigerian. In this case, the synchronic is taken for the diachronic, the part taken for a whole and the reader does not situate culture within the same historical and spatial framework designed by the writer. This informs the design of an analytic framework of my survey: the metonymic

and non-metonymic reader. As the survey result shows, the reading community falls to the category of metonymic readers as they take the part for a whole in terms of culture in literature. And worst of all, the most important hypothesis and the eventual finding of this thesis, is that this group of readers adopts literature as an ethnographic resource. The non-metonymic readers are the ideal readers of cultural text. As the survey result shows, the interpretive community falls into this category of readers.

Holistically, adopting and applying several analytic and theoretical formulations for the reading of cultural texts like the linguistic notion of the deep and surface structure and the philosophical concepts of phenomenology and empiricism, this thesis calls for a new approach, one that will entail that the reading of cultural texts go *pari-pasu* with a thorough investigation of ethnographic materials.

Talking about the specifics, through Amos Tutuola' literary oeuvre and Nikolai Gogol's Ukrainian Tales, I have been able to explicate on aspects of the dynamics of the supernatural lore of both the Yoruba of the South Western Nigeria and the Ukrainian people. This is juxtaposed with the incapacity of the literary texts by the two authors to adequately represent the culture they claim to depict, especially to the reading community. Although with Amos Tutuola, I found a rare commitment of a story writer to consciously embrace the accuracy of culture in literature, one that mimics the ethos of ethnography, there are some basic motifs governing all his episodic writings which are invisible on the surface level, but which are extant in ethnographic accounts on Yoruba cosmology and ontological philosophy. However, these motifs do not have a resonance in most of the critical works on him. Against this backdrop and other consideration like the reader's inability to situate the cultural text within the synchronic and diachronic or

within the spatial and historical frameworks the writer situates it, I have adopted and applied Chomskian linguistic notions of the deep and surface structure to further reveal the complexity of a cultural text.

The deep structures of Tutuola's works are the Yoruba belief in the concepts of abiku, "mogbon juba", reincarnation, sacrifice and most importantly, the belief in the pantheon of deities, an offshoot of Yoruba ontological philosophy. For example, through my ethnographic quest, I discovered that Tutuola's invincible hero, the Palm Wine Drinkard, whose character trait can be seen in almost all of the writer's heroes and heroines, is an archetype of the god Obatala, who was extremely given to palm wine in Yoruba ontological philosophy. This fact is missing in all of the criticism on the writer's works. And this is an underlying motif in the writer's literary oeuvre. Moreover, a very dramatic issue which makes his works one of the most unique among folk literatures is the writer's literary stylistics. For instance, there is an authorial voice constantly addressing the reader and explaining dictions and concepts with their cultural roots sometimes in block letters and parenthesis. This is partly the influence of *orature*.

This transposition of oral tradition of story-telling into the written "canonical" literature is one of the evidences that demonstrate the writer's intent and commitment to relate Yoruba belief in the supernatural. Thus Tutuola prefers to communicate Yoruba supernatural beliefs and convey its literary tradition, than to strive to adjust to the canonical English tradition in which he wrote. Although, like some critics could argue, this may be due to his inability to adjust to the English tradition, Tutuola presents these beliefs in a way that shows that the author shares them, is committed to them and to their significance in the minds of those who believe in them.

Nikolai Gogol's Ukrainian stories embody Ukrainian beliefs in the supernatural. The folklore concepts of *Rusalka*, *Ivan Kupalo*, the fern's flower, belief in witches and the devil as an iconic figure in the *vertep* theater tradition, the *domovik* (house spirit), etc, are the deep structures of Gogol's work. However, these are not revealing on the surface level of the tales as they can only be understood by a reader who is familiar with Ukrainian culture or have investigated Ukrainian ethnographic materials.

Gogol plays with Ukrainian folkloric elements and uses them to advance the plot of his stories. In doing this, and in order to ensure the success of each story, several literary techniques were employed. These include dramatic irony, dream symbols, farce, and the uncanny mixture of fiction and reality, such that the supernatural significance of the folk elements is downplayed and the author's antipathy or lack of belief in them is demonstrated.

As I discussed above, the connection enforced between the cat and the witch creates what I have described as the witch-cat discourse, which is not widely known in Ukrainian ethnography. Through my inquiry, I discovered that the source of this discourse is neither the Ukrainian culture, nor the influence of Western literature on Gogol, but the author's childhood dream experience. Here, authorial idiosyncrasy has a remarkable affect on ethnographic accuracy. It is therefore safe to postulate that with Gogol, as can be expected in most folk story writers, literary ingenuity supersedes culture as the latter is used to enhance the former. On the contrary, with Tutuola, culture is of paramount importance compared to literary ingenuity, as the latter is used to enhance the former.

Finally, in adopting and applying philosophical concepts to the analysis of the reading of cultural texts, I have described phenomenological readers as those who learn culture through their experience with it while reading the cultural text. This form of reading entails that the textuality of the text lends cultural meaning, which the reader adopts in cognition. Given the unreliability of culture in literature, I favor and campaign for empiricist reading. In this case, the reader does not learn culture merely from his experience of reading the text, but engages in a conscious quest to learn culture from ethnographic sources. He evaporates from the domain of literature, and condenses in the domain of culture, Socrates' provinces of poetry and philosophy respectively. While the former is, according to Socrates, irrational and without reason, the latter is the realm of reason. Therefore, I invite further research into how ethnographic materials can function along with the reading and appreciation of cultural text within and without the literary classroom.

## Notes

1. "Magic." *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Random House, Inc. 03 Mar. 2007. <Dictionary.com *http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/magic*>.

2. "Magic." *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004. 03 Mar. 2007. <Dictionary.com *http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/magic*

3 William A Covino. *Magic, Rhetoric and Literacy: An Eccentric History of the Composing Imagination*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. p.1

4 "Magic" Online Etymology Dictionaries. Douglas Harper, Historian. 03 Mar. 2007. *Dictionary.com http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/magic.*

5 "Magic." *Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary*. 03 Mar. 2007. Dictionary.com *http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/magic.*

6 op. cit.Covino.p.1

7 ibid, 2

8 Maria-Elena Angula. *Magic Realism: Social Context and Discourse*. New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1995.xi

9 ibid. Angula, p.9

10 Sofia's interview is contained in a recorded tape, being part of the requirement of a research in SLAV 697

11 Mythopoeic writers employ experience and history to create myth. In this way, and in most cases, they are engaged in a postcolonial dialectics and the principle of making a statement that the binary of a subaltern and colonizing (superior) cultures be broken. The former is often projected by mythifying history which results in the creation of

myth for individual culture. In the case of Tutuola, these "myths" as it were, already exist in Yoruba cosmology, but are conveyed in his stories. Likewise, Gogol did not create myths in his writings. He conveys them. Even his Taras Bulba, which apparently borrows a lot from the 12th century East Slavic history, merely fictionalizes history in an epic dimension. For instance, the epic hero, Taras Bulba, is a variant of the historical hero, Prince Danilo.For a clear understanding of the term mythopoeia and its exemplary use, see Jeyifo, Biodun. *The Truthful Lie: Essays in Sociology of African Drama.* London: New Beacon Books Ltd, 1985, p.26

12 Northrop Frye. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957.p.20

13 Bernth Lindfors "Amos Tutuola: Debts and Assets" in ed. *Critical Perspectives on Amos Tutuola*.Washington DC: Three Continents Press, 1975. P.276. This 1970 article covers a wide range of perspectives on Tutuola's world: his biography and early motivations for writing, literary origin and influences, publishers and the author's penury.

14 Harold Collins characterizes Tutuola's main heroes thus. See Harold Collins. "Tutuola's Literary Powers" in Bernth Lindfors ed. ibid.p.164

15 Henceforth: Lindfors, p.276

16 ibid.276

17 Tutuola has often been compared to John Bunyan not just because he confirms he has read and was influenced by the narrative pattern of *The Pilgrim's Progress* but because he approaches English language much with the same naivety as did Bunyan. Also, I have used the term a discontinued Nigerian literature simply to

illustrate how in many of Tutuola's criticism, it has been argued that the author does not have literary discipleship. That is nobody has imitated his form and style of writing and nobody ever will. Then the assumption that the author is the pioneer, or founder, in Collins parlance, of Nigerian literature suffers contestation. In terms of themes and content, Tutuola may be bestowed this credit. But in the sense of the overall writing art in Nigeria, it may be a misjudgment. Most Nigerian writers are mythopoeic writers and Tutuola is not. See Harold Collins. "Founding A New National Literature: The Ghost Novels of Amos Tutuola" in ed. Lindfors ibid, p.70. See also Moor, Gerald "Amos Tutuola" p.57, Lindfors "Amos Tutuola: Debts and Assets" p. 305. While both critics agree that Tutuola's books are "far more like a fascinating *cul-de- sac* than the beginning of anything directly useful to other writers", Lindfors nonetheless praises the success story of the author: messenger turned world renown author, as a possible inspiration to many educated Nigerian authors to write

18 For a more detailed biographical information on the author see Lindfors, op.cit, p.275 306, and Harold R. Collins. *Amos Tutuola*.New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1969. On the author's penury despite his fame and a specific allegation made against an American scholar who dubiously bought Tutuola's original manuscript leaving him penury, see a *Daily Times* Opinion article entitled "Cultural Plunder". *Daily Times*. June 15, 1978.p.3

19 Tutuola, Amos. *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (Grove Press edition).New York, 1953. p.7.

20. Henceforth: Lindfors p.297. ; Amos Tutuola. *My Life In The Bush of Ghosts*. London: Faber and Faber, 1954.pp. 1-3

21. Geoffrey Parrinder is a prolific writer and scholar on world psychology and religions. Among some of his works on African religions and anthropology are *West African Religion* (1949, 1961), *Witchcraft, European and African*. London: Faber and Faber, 1958. *African Psychology* (1951), *African Traditional Religion*. London : SPCK, 1954; *African Mythology*. Hamlyn Publ. Group Ltd(1967; *West African Psychology : A Comparative Study of Psychological and Religious Thought*, James Clarke Company (2002).In *African Mythology*, the author makes an enormous expose on Yoruba mythology.
22. Lindfors, Bernth. *Critical Perspectives On Amos Tutuola*.Washington DC : Three Continents Press, 1975, p.276.See articles on Amos Tutuola in this collection by Gerald Moor, Harold Collins, Bernth Lindfors and Eric Robinson
23. See Eric Robinson, pp. 29-30, Babasola Johnson, pp.30-31, Adeagbo Akinjogbin, pp.41-42. ed. Lindfors op.cit
24. Johnson, Babasola.p.31 ibid, ed.Lindfors.
25. ibid, Johnson.p.31.
26. Akinjogbin, ibid,p.41;
27. Collins, Harold. "Founding A National Literature: The Ghost Novels of Amos Tutuola". in Henceforth :Lindfors, p.70
28. Naipaul, V.S.in ed.Lindfors, p. 87 opcit
29. Vavilov, V.N. *Proza Nigerii.Moskva*: Izd. "Nauka", 1973, p.3
30. Neumarkt, Paul. "Amos Tutuola: Emerging African Literature". In op.cit.Lindfors.p.183
31. Lo Taban Liyong. "Tutuola, Son of Zinjanthropus".ed Lindfors, ibid, p.122.

32. Ferguson, John. *The Yorubas of Nigeria*. Edinburgh, London : The Open University Press, 1970, p.20

33. ibid,p.26

34. Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process*; Gennep, Van Annord. *The Rites of Passage*. See works cited list for full citation

35. The Ifa priest (babalawo) is consulted who in turn consults the god, Orunmila through the divinatory poetry of the Ifa oracle. For a detailed but concise acquaintance with the Yoruba traditional practices in all the rites de passage, the Yoruba people, land and general worldview, Ferguson John (op.cit.) gives an outline suitable for a quick digest.

36. Abiku, the weakling child, or literarily, the dieing child, is an important folklore belief in Yoruba cosmology. It is no wonder this phenomenon merit the one title each from the two great writers.

37. See John Ferguson (op.cit) for a full explanation on this.

38. Eshu is a graven image to whom sacrifices are made in the house for continued peace and protection. There is however a contradiction. Eshu, who seems to be a beneficent spirit is regarded as one of the ministers of Olodumare, the Supreme God.Eshu functions as the executor of evil in Olodumare's cabinet, since as I will explain later on, the Yoruba believe that all things, good and evil come from Olodumare, the Supreme.

39. For a detailed explanation on the activities of the *domovik*, see Boriak, Olena.

40. "Midwife in Traditional Ukrainian Culture: Ritual, Folklore and Mythology." M.Ryl's' Kyi Institute of Arts, Folklore and Ethnology. Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences. PMID : 12710154 [ PubMed-indexed for MEDLINE]

41. Ogun is the god of iron.

42. Knappert gives a concise account of creation. See Knappert, Jan. *Kings, Gods and Spirits from African Mythology* (1986) p. 15-16. Since the myth of creation is interwoven with religion, Bolaji Idowu approaches a scientific and comprehensive documentation of both subjects based on oral account and actual practice of the Yoruba people. See Idowu, Bolaji. *Olodumare : God in Yoruba Belief,* 1962.A.P. Ellis follows the same lead with Bolaji Idowu.Yoruba account of creation is not given a separate attention but narrated along with the belief in "chief gods" and "minor gods". See *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples*. Ellis, A.P., 1894, 1970.pp.34-70.Geoffrey Parrinder, however, embraces a panoramic account of African mythologies. Yoruba account of creation is not accorded a separate section but takes the first position among the other African creation myths Parrinder collate. See *African Mythology* , Geoffrey Parrinder.1967, p.20

43. In Jeyifo, Biodun. *The Truthful Lie: Essays in Sociology of African Drama.* London: New Beacon Books Ltd, 1985, p.24.

44. Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), p.7

45. See Parrinder, ibid, p.14.Frye op.cit.p.106. Since Frye does some sort of discourse analysis on critical concept, his views about myths change from time to time, but with a common denominator, which is myth as explanation for existence

46. ibid, Frye, p.107; Parrinder, p.11

47. Parrinder, op.cit. p.13.
48. Knappert, op. cit. 15.
49. Idowu, op. cit.79
50. Idowu, ibid, p.79
51. Idowu, pp.77-79
52. Edward B. Tylor is the famous anthropologist whose definition of culture is often referred to in anthropological scholarship.
53. Idowu , op.cit , p.85
54. See Toyin Falola. *Culture and Customs in Nigeria.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001
55. See « Do Beliefs About Causation Influence Attitudes to Mental Illness". *World Psychiatry.* Oye Gureje, et al *2006* June, v.5 (2),104-107. http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1525129.
56. In the same vein, anyone familiar with Old East Slavic literature/history, especially Prince Danilo's heroic deeds in the Galycian-Volynian chronicle will understand the egoistic tendencies in Gogol's epic hero, Taras Bulba, in *Taras Bulba*.For instance, like Tutuola's hero- Drinkard, Taras Bulba is not ahistorical
57. Amos Tutuola. *The Palm Wine Drinkard*
58. Obaship can simply be translated to mean kingship – the monarchical system of governance in Yoruba land.
59. Tutuola, Amos. *The Palm Wine Drinkard*, p.16
60. ibid.p.10
61. ibid p.12-13
62. ibid p.23

63. ibid p.39
64. ibid, p.39
65. ibid p. 80
66. ibid p. 9
67. ibid p.100
68. ibid, pp.99-100
69. ibid ,p.100
70. Awolalu, F. Omosade.*Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. Bristol : Longman, 1979.p.55
71. Amos Tutuola, .*Simbi and the Satyr of the Jungle*. P.29
72. *ibid, The Witch Herbalist of the Remote Town*.p.47
73. Tutuola, Amos. *The Brave African Huntress*.p.9
74. ibid, *The Palm wine Drinkard*, p.23
75. Tutuola, Amos. *Simbi and the Satyr of the Jungle*. London : Faber and Faber.p.11
76. ibid, p.12
77. ibid, p.13
78. Amos, Tutuola.*The Palm Wine Drinkard*, p. 95
79. Tutuola, Amos. *The Witch Herbalist of the Remote Town*.p.18
80. For example, the phenomenon of the Gladiators of the old Roman Empire was one stage of barbarism in European civilization if it is not situated within the historical framework. The fatal fight between the gladiators was the most respected form of entertainment for early Europeans and this was one of the indices of existence that kept the society going.

81. ibid. *The Palm Wine Drinkard*, p.95

82. *The Palm Wine Drinkard*, p.23

83. Amos Tutuola. *Ajaiyi and His Inherited Poverty*, pp.120-121

84. Amos Tutuola. *Feather Woman of the Jungle*.P.52

85. ibid, p.51

86. *Simbi and The Satyr of the Jungle*,p.11

87. In "Founding A New National Literature : The Ghost Novels of Amos Tutuola" ed Lindfors op.cit., Harold Collins makes a case for Yoruba salvage culture explored in Tutuola's works, arguing that they are "immersed in the mythical past" and so the "educated West Africans [should be] wise enough by not expecting their new literature to turn so completely and abruptly from the old culture, even if it were barbaric and primitive" (my emphasis).Collins argues further that "the role of folklore, or mythology as we call it, in Greek literature is a commonplace : the Greeks were too self-assured to be ashamed of their remote ancestors' legendary atrocities, bacchanalian orgies, and human sacrifices, their fanciful titans, minotaur's, sphinxes, harpies, gorgons, furies, and other bogeys" P.66 in ed. Lindfors.

88. Moore, Gerald. "Amos Tutuola: A Nigerian Visionary". In ed. Lindfors, op.cit. p.282

89. Achebe, Chinua. "Work and Play in the Palm Wine Drinkard" .1978: 26.

90. Hubbert Ogunde is a popular Yoruba filmmaker, actor and singer who, it is often said, visited the underwater for close to seven years and on his return, he became enriched with supernatural powers.

91. Lindfors, Bernth. "Amos Tutuola : Debts and Assets" in ed. Lindfors, opcit p.280. See also Arnott, Kathleen. *African Myths and Legends*.Glawsgow et al: Oxford UP, 1962. P.125

91. Vsevolod Setchkarev. *Gogol: His Life and Works*.Transl. Robert Kramer. London: Peter Owen, 1965.3. For a detailed account on Gogol's life, see pp. 3- 91.

92 ibid

93. Barabash, Yu. *Pochva i Sudba: Gogol i Ukrainskaya Literatura: U Istokov.* Moskva : Nasledie, *1995 p.19*

*92.* Setchkarev.op.cit.p.5

93. ibid.p.7

94. ibid.p11

95. ibid,p12

96. ibid, p.12

97. ibid.p.8

98. ibid.p.97, 109

99. *Gogol: Entsiklopedia*, p..95.See full citation on the works cited list

100. Ibid.p.95

101. Molly Sally Stephen. *Gogol's Afterlife*, pp.45-46

102. ibid, p.46

103. Kent. *Complete Tales of Nikolai Gogol.* Vol.1 .P.597.

104. ibid, p.35

105.ibid, p.41

106. For a detailed explanation on how Ilnytzkyj harmonized the divides and fosters a compromise, one that favors a position that Gogol some cultural traditions may derive from Gogol's writing since he was part of the creative force of the imperial culture, known today as Ukrainian and Russian cultures, see "Cultural Indeterminacy in the Russian Empire: Nikolai Gogol As A Ukrainian Post-Colonial Writer", in ed. Paul Duncan Morris. *A World of Slavic Literature: Essays in Comparative Slavic Studies in Honor of Edward Mozejko*. Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica, 2002. pp.153 - 171

--- ." Modelling Culture in the Empire: Death of the All-Russian Idea and Ukrainian Modernism".Eds. Andreas Kappeler et.al. *Culture, Nation, Identity: The Russian-Ukrainian Encounter* (1600-1945). Edmonton – Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2003.pp.298-324.

107 For a handful of ethnographic recordings from first-hand informants testifying to the enormous influence these events and beliefs have on social life of the Ukraine, see Ivanits, pp.190-205

108 For a full explanation on all these folklore elements, see Ivanits, op.cit. pp. 178-189.

109 Oinas, Felix J.*Essays on Russian Folklore and Mythology,* p.94

110 Rusalki is the plural of Rusalka – mermaid in East Slavic lore. There is a general belief that these spirits come from unquiet female death. Kononenko Molye describes her as "the only true female East Slavic spirit"See Kononenko, Molye. "Mermaids (Rusalki) and Russian Beliefs About Women". Eds. Anna Lisa Crone and Catherine V.Chvany, *New Studies in Russian Language and Literature.*

Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers, Inc. 1986.pp.221-238. (p.223)

111. Kent, ibid.p.86

112. Gennep, Arnold Van. *The Rites of Passage.* See full bibliographical information in the works cited list

113. Kent, op.cit. p. 35

114.ibid, p.41

115. ibid. p.44

116 "The Fair At Sorochintsy" in Kent, p.10.

117 "St. John's Eve" in Kent.p.27.

118 Kent.p. 38. opcit

119 Kent.ibid, p. 46.

120 Kent, ibid, p.40

121 Kent 65

122 Svetlana Kukharenko, apart from being a Ukrainian, is a Ukrainian folklore researcher at the Modern Languages and Cultural Studies of the University of Alberta. My interview with her also reveals that such strong and sole association of the cat with the witch is an overblown exaggeration, of a Gogolian type. Svetlana lists several animals which serve as the transformative subjects of the witch in Ukrainian cosmology.

123 op.cit.Oinas, Felix, p.99

124 op.cit.Ivanits.p.200

125 Jakobson, 2002.p.92

126 "Strike Now and Ask Questions Later: Witchcraft Stories in Ukraine". *Ethnologies*,

Vol.20, No1, 1998

127 See Bhabha, Homi. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse". *The Location of Culture*.Bhabha engages in a rigorous and pragmatic analysis of *colonial* discourse. Here, he discovers some inconsistencies that exist between colonial practice and colonial doctrine, thus resulting in an ambivalent discourse. I am appropriating this term to reflect the ambivalence caused by Gogol's embellishment of the witch-cat phenomenon, which has a remarkable distortion on Ukrainian ethnography.

128 Karpuk, A. Paul. "Gogol's Research On Ukrainian Customs For the *Dikanka Tales*". *Russian Review*, Vol. 56, No. 2. (Apr., 1997). 222. See comment on Markeviech's and on poem, cat and witches

129. Kent, op.cit. p.52

130. Kent, p.55

131 ibid, p.66

132 ibid.p.70

133 Kent.ibid,p.86

134 ibid, p.132

135 ibid, p.158.

136. Danilo Burulbash is a resurrected historical archetype of the 13th century Galicia Volinia Prince Danilo in East Slavic history, Prince Danilo is iconic in the history of the Galicia Volinia in East Slavic Empire.He was known for his incredible valor. Gogol resurrects this historical archetype first in Prince Danilo is iconic in the history of the Galicia Volinia in East Slavic Empire. He was known for his incredible valor.

Gogol resurrects this historical archetype first in *A Terrible Vengeance* and later in *Taras Bulba*, to convey the Cossack identity, the bedrock of nationalism for today's Ukraine, and later in Taras Bulba., to convey the Cossack identity, the bedrock of nationalism for today's Ukraine.

137 In Habib, M.A .R. *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato To the Present*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.p.23.

138 ibid p.22-23

139 ibid p.24

140 ibid p.24

141 Achebe, Chinua. "Heart of Darkness: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources". in ed. *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays*. New York: Anchor Books, 1990.1-20.In this essay Chinua Achebe contends that Heart of Darkness, though seen as a critique of European imperialism in most of the critical reviews, it calls into question the humanity in black Africans. Moreover, I have dealt with this issue in a previous research on African literature

142. Bhabha, Homi. "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse. Ed.*The Location of Culture* .London; New York: Routledge, 2004.pp.85-92

143. See Taylor, Eric. *AB Guide to Music.* Vol 1. England. Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 1989. ISBN 1-854-72446-0, Apel, Willi & Daniel, Ralph T. The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music. New York: NY. Simon & Schuster Inc, 1960. ISBN 0-671-73747-3, Sorce, Richard. *Music Theory for the Music Professional.* Ardsley House, 1995. ISBN 1-880-15720-9

144. See Rajan Tilottama and Plotnitsky in eds. *Idealism Without Absolutes:*

*Philosophy and Romantic Culture*.pp. 241-245).

145. In de Beaugrande, Robert. "Readers Responding to Literature: Coming to Grips With Realities". In ed. Elaine F. Nardocchio *Reader Response to Literature: The Empirical Dimension.* p.195

146. ibid

147. ibid

148 David R Cerbone. *Understanding Phenomenology* .Chesham: Acumen, 2006.p.1

149 in Koelb, Clayton. *The Incredulous Reader: Literature and the Function of Disbelief.* Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1984.p.119

150 Sellars, Wilfrid. *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (With an Introduction by Richard Forty, Study Guide by Robert Brandom).Cambridge; Massachusetts; London: Harvard UP., 1997.P.6.

151. ibid.p.13

152 ibid

153. Cole, Suzanne, Lindemann, Jeff. *Reading and Responding to Literature* p.10

154. Habib, M.A.R. *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato To the Present*.p.4

155. ibid. p.4

156 ibid,p.6

157 ibid, p6

158. ibid, p.4

159. In an Essay entitled "Yet Once More", Stanley Fish also examined "the possibility of transforming literary study so that it is more immediately engaged with the political issues that are today so urgent: issues of oppression, racism, terrorism,

violence against women and homosexuals, cultural imperialism, and so on". Fish, Stanley. "Yet Once More" in Machor, L. James and Goldstein Philip.eds. *Reception Study: From Literary Theory To Cultural Studies*. New York and London: Routledge, 2001.p.29

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